THE INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF RAJA ALI HAJI (1809-1870) IN NINETEENTH- CENTURY MALAY THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

BY

MUHAMAD AIMAN BIN RAHIM

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Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the literary and intellectual contributions of Raja Ali Haji to the Malay world. It begins by discussing the intellectual history of the Malay world prior to the time of Raja Ali Haji. This discussion provides background information on the intellectual development in the Malay world leading to the time of Raja Ali Haji. It shows how Malay scholars in the 17th century such as Nuruddin ar-Raniri, Syeikh Hamzah al-Fansuri, Syeikh Shamsuddin -Sumatrani and others contributed to various disciplines such as history, theology and Sufism. This study then provides an overview of Raja Ali Haji's literary and philosophical works such as *Thammaratul Muhimmah, Tuhfat an-Nafis, Bustanul Katibin Li Sibyan* and others. The third chapter is the heart of this research as it discusses the political thought of Raja Ali Haji based on his work *Thammaratul Muhimmah*. This book tells its readers on how to build an Islamic government according to the principles of Islam and gives examples from past Islamic civilisations. Finally, this study examines the reception to the works of Raja Ali Haji by foreign and local scholars who lived during his time and after his death. It also compares the contributions of Raja Ali Haji with those of two other prolific Malay scholars who lived after him, namely, Hamka and Za'ba. The primary sources used in this research are mainly the writings of Raja Ali Haji himself such as *Tuhfat an--AlNafis, Gurindam 12, Bustanul Katibin, Thammaratul Muhimmah, Syair Hukum Nikah* and others.
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مُلخَّص البحث

تبحث هذه الدراسة عن المساهمات الأدبيّة والفكريّة لراجا علي الحاج في عالم الملايو، حيث تبدأ الدراسة بمناقشة التاريخ الفكري في عالم الملايو قبل زمن راجا علي الحاج. وتوفّر هذه المناقشة خلفيّة المعرفيّة للتّطوّر الفكري الّذى أدّى إلى زمن راجا علي الحاج. وتوضّح الدراسة كيف ساهم علماء الملايو في القرن السابع عشر، مثل نور الدين الرانري، والسيد حمزة الفنسوري، والشيخ شمس الدين السومتراني وغيرهم في أشكال مختلفة من العلم والمعرفة مثل التاريخ واللاهوت والصوفية. وبعد ذلك، تقدّم الدراسة نظرة عامّة عن الأعمال الأدبيّة والفلسفيّة لراجا علي الحاج مثل ثمارات المهمة، وتحفة النفيس وبستان الكاتبين وغيرها. والفصل الثالث الذى هو جوهر هذا البحث يناقش الفكر السياسي لراجا علي الحاج مرتكزا على كتابه الشهير "ثمرات المهمة". فيخبر هذا الكتاب القراء و الدارسين عن كيفيّة بناء حكومة إسلاميّة وفق مبادئ الإسلام ويورد أمثلة عديدة من الحكومات الإسلامية السابقة. وأخيراً، تفحص الدراسة مدى تلقّى أعمال راجا علي الحاج من قبل علماء أجانب ومحليين الذين عاشوا في عصره وبعد وفاته، كما تقارن مساهماته بمساهمات العلماء الآخرين من الملايو الغزير الإنتاج الذين عاشوا بعده، وهما حمكا و زعبا. وبشكل عام، المصادر الأوّلية المستخدمة في هذا البحث هي بشكل أساسي كتابات راجا علي الحاج نفسه مثل تحفة النفيس، واثنتى عشرة قصيدة، وبستان الكاتبين للصبيان، وثمرات المهمة، والشعر فى حكم النكاح وغيرها.

.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

……..
Mohd Helmi bin Mohd Sobri
Supervisor

……..
Elmira Akhmetova
Co-Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

……..
Fauziah Fathil
Internal Examiner

This thesis was submitted to the Department of History and Civilization and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

……..
Mohd Helmi bin Mohd Sobri
Head, Department of History and Civilization

This thesis was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and Civilization.

……..
Shukran Bin Abdul Rahman
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DECLARATION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Raja Ali Haji bin Raja Ahmad was a renowned scholar in the Malay world. He was born around 1820 in a Bugis royal family and received his primary education in Pulau Penyengat which is one of the administrative centres of the Riau-Lingga sultanate. According to Abu Hassan Sham, he then sailed to Mecca for 2 years with his father for Hajj in 1827[1]. After coming back from hajj, Raja Ali preached Islamic knowledge and taught the locals by using various traditional Islamic books such as *Kitab Al-Masadir, Al-Jurumiyya, Ummul Barahin, Jawharatul Tawhid* (The Precious Gems of Tauhid) which cover the fields of Arabic language, Tauhid and Sufism.[2]After some time, people acknowledged him as an Islamic scholar and writer in Riau in the 19th century. A lot of great works have been produced such as historical works of *Tuhfat An-Nafis (*The Precious Gifts) and *Silsilah Melayu Bugis* (The Genealogy of Malay and Bugis) and other writings on Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Political Thought, Malay Language, Islamic Ethics, and Arabic language[3]. Most of his works, regardless of their genre, featured the element of Sufism.

The relevance of Sufism was also preached to all members of the society. This was because this element is important thing to be considered in Islam which is the *Ihsan* (Benevolence). His most notable poem known as '*Gurindam 12'* contains meaningful

[1]Abu Hassan Sham, *Puisi – Puisi Raja Ali Haji*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Kuala Lumpur 1993), 82
[2] Ibid., 56
[3] Siddiq Fadzil, *Raja Ali Haji Kecendikiawan Dan Kepengaranganya*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan, 2015,) 1

advices. He also wrote numerous *Syair* where they are about religious knowledge such as *Syair Hukum Nikah* or also known as *Syair Suluh Pegawai*[4] *(*The Poem of Law of Marriage) and several others. Nevertheless, apart from those, there are writings by him in other fields such as *Syair Siti Sianah, Syair* in the knowledge of *Faraid* (Wealth Heritance) and others.

Raja Ali Haji was not only a scholar, but also a political figure as he became the advisor of the Yang Dipertuan Muda Raja Jaafar in Riau. The Yang Dipertuan Muda or simply Yamtuan Muda was the second most important position in the Riau Sultanate after the Sultan himself. It was also reported that he and a Dutch officer[5] named Von De Wall had exchanged letters regarding Malay language. Malay rulers and aristocrats acknowledged him as an expert in Malay customs and this was proven when a group of people from Johor came and asked him about cultural matters in Johor[6].

In order for us to understand the political context of his timewe must look at the history of Johor Riau sultanate. It started when Malacca fell into the hands of Portuguese in 1511, after which the Sultan retreated and set up a new government in Johor. The lineage of the Sultan of Malacca continued to rule Johor until 1699. The last Sultan of Johor from the Malaccan bloodline was Sultan Mahmud II, who left no heir for the throne. This event led to a dispute later on among the ministers. But they finally decided to elect Bendahara Abdul Jalil as the new Sultan, thus, marked the beginning of the Bendahara dynasty in the history of the Johor Sultanate.

[4] Sham, Abu Hassan,113
[5] Jan ver den Putten, *Four Malay Letters To Von De Wall,* Leiden,University Of Hamburg,1992, 522
[6] M.A Fawzi Basri, *Warisan Sejarah Johor,* Kuala Lumpur, Persatuan Sejarah Johor,1983, 24

In 1717[7], a leader from Siak named 'Raja Kechik' claimed that, he was the heir of Sultan Mahmud II[8] and invaded Johor in 1718[9]. He managed to seize the throne and styled himself as Sultan Abdul Rahmat Riayat Shah. In 1721, Sultan Sulaiman from the previous Bendahara lineage was at war with Raja Kechik and managed to expel him from Johor with the support from the Bugis.

The Bugis tribe is one of the tribes that live in Southern Makassar, present days Sulawesi, Indonesia. They are known for their valor qualities in war and played significant role in the Johor-Riau kingdom. The early Bugis figures who arrived in the Malay world were known as the five brothers of Bugis warriors (*Pahlawan Bugis Lima Bersaudara)* named Daeng Parani, Daeng Marewah, Daeng Menambun, Daeng Chelak, and Daeng Kemasi[10]. Their mission was to assist Sultan Sulaiman in his fight against Sultan Kechik in Lingga. They won the war and the Bugis brothers were honored with the position known as *Yang Dipertuan Muda* (Deputy Ruler), a powerful advisor to the Sultan[11]. The office of *Yang Dipertuan Muda* was a hereditary title that could only be inherited by the Bugis.

The following were the list of Yang Dipertuan Muda:

1.	Daeng Marewah	1722-1728
2.	Daeng Chelak	1728-1745
3.	Daeng Kemboja[12]	1745-1777
4.	Raja Haji Fi Sabilillah	1777-1784
5.	Raja Ali	1784-1806

[7] Nabilah Nizar, *Sejarah Kerajaan Johor Riau*, 9
[8] Ibid, 3.
[9] Ibid, 9.
[10] Mardiana Nordin, *Politik Dan Pentadbiran Era Johor Sehingga Abad Ke18*,Conference Proceeding Tamadun Melayu Johor: Johor Menuju Ke Arah Pusat Tamadun Melayu Serantau, 17
[11] Ibid, 10.
[12] Ibid, 18.

6. Raja Jaafar 1806-1831

The seat of *Yamtuan Muda* was at a small island known as Pulau Penyengat. One of the *Yang Dipertuan Muda,* who was instrumental in developing Pulau Penyengat into an Islamic centre and culture was Raja Jaafar[13]. This tradition was continued by Raja Ali (1845-1857), Raja Abdullah (1857-1858), and Raja Muhamad Yusuf (1858-1899) who was the 10th and last *Yang Dipertuan Muda*[14].

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The study in history, language and literature can be deemed as the fields that were given lack of attention and practical by the society. Thus, the researcher intends to bring this important field of study back to society by studying the contribution of Raja Ali Haji in various fields like history, religion, language, and literature. The book of *Tuhfat Al-Nafis* (The Precious Gift) will be examined in depth along with his *Silsilah Melayu Bugis* (The Genealogy of Malay and Bugis). As for the philosophical part, the book that is going to be examined is *Thammaratul Muhimmah*.

The next thing the researcher would intend to insert is the position of Malay language during 19th century. Although the modern people do not regard it as a preferred language, it happened the other way around during the 19th century. There were few interactions between Raja Ali Haji and Von De Wall, a Dutch minister regarding some Malay vocabularies. This indirectly proves the credibility of Raja Ali Haji in Malay language.

Another important thing to be highlighted is the existence of an infamous press named Rushdiah Club. This club was established after the death of Raja Ali Haji which

[13] Abu Hassan Sham, *Puisi – Puisi Raja Ali Haji* , Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Kuala Lumpur 1993, 6
[14] Ibid., 56

was around 1880 or 1890 and influenced by his writings[15]. This club was created by the Sultan Yusuf of Riau in order for the *Ahlu Musyuwarah* (The Council of Ulama) to spread their ideas. In accordance with their aim to promote culture, language, and Malay literature, the Rushdiah Club produced significant writings on various themes from language, religion, and law to medicine and astronomy. This club act as the vanguard of the cultural and religion penetration of the western culture. The Dutch did not manage to install their language, culture and thinking into Riau`s kingdom. Instead, Riau continue on producing a lot of *Gurindam`s, Pantun`s* and the prolific Jawi writings which all derived from the Islamic value. There were no liberalism, atheism and other non – Islamic thinking reported in the society during that time.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the underlying social, cultural and moral themes that connect various different genres of Raja Ali Haji`s writing?
2. What were the political messages in Raja Ali Haji's writings and how were it reflected in his writings?
3. How was the reception of Raja Ali Haji work among Malay and Dutch Colonial during his lifetime and after his death?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the underlying socio-cultural themes of Raja Ali Haji's works.
2. To study the relationship between his socio-political context and Raja Ali Haji's writings.

[15] Wiwin Oktasari and Hafiz Zakariya, *From Riau to Singapore: A Content Analysis of the Rushdiah Club Major* PublishedWritings *1890-1950*,International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies, Vol. 4, No. 3. (2017)

3. To study the reception of the society towards Raja Ali Haji's writings.

1.5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study will focus on Raja Ali Haji`s writings and his contributions during the 19th century. During his time, a lot of Western influences existed in the kingdom. Writing in high Malay philosophical language, Raja Ali Haji tried to restore back the glory of Malay language and culture. According to him, the fusion between religion and culture will create a great civilization. His writings in various fields and the literary qualities are still valued and appreciated by later scholars. This is proven by a lot of commentaries on his works such as by Hamka, Rushdiah Club, Za'ba and also some contemporary scholars from Malaysia and Indonesia. His work in historical fields such as *Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis* (The Geneology of Malay and Bugis) discussed important events in the history of Johor Riau Sultanate. He also used poetic language in giving opinions and voicing out his thoughts.

There was only a small number of writers or intellectuals found during the 19th century namely Raja Ahmad Bin Raja Haji, Raja Hassan Raja Ali Haji, and Raja Khalid Bin Raja Hasan[16]. Their works mostly involve the topic of language and culture. In comparison to them, the contributions of Raja Ali Haji were much more extensive as his contributions covered various aspects of knowledge such as history, philosophy, language and politics. Another writer, Abdullah Munshi wrote several *Hikayats* (chronicles) but his writings were not as vast as Raja Ali`s.

Another important thing to be highlighted in this study is how the Dutch and other colonial influences did not manage to get in the state of Johor and Riau. The

[16] Abu Hassan Sham, *Puisi – Puisi Raja Ali Haji*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Kuala Lumpur 1993, 70

civilians and rulers were still practicing the same religion and culture despite few attempts made by the Dutch to propagate their religion and lifestyle. This is one of the research questions that will be answered in this study. Raja Ali Haji was the last scholar to be found in the Malay world to write about the political advices according to Islam.

The Malay *Syair* and *Pantun* (poem) were the platforms for the scholars to propagate their advice, thought, Islamic jurisprudences and other fields. This can be observed in the works of Raja Ali Haji and other scholars. Among other well-known literatures were *Syair Perang Johor (Johor War Shair) Syair Siti Sianah., Syair Hukum Nikah (Marriage Jurispundence Shair), Syair Sinar Gemala Mastika Alam (Shair of The Gem of The Universe)* and many others. Besides, they were beautifully written based on how creatively language was used in the writings and they were also packed with information that were delivered smoothly from the writers to the readers.

Raja Ali Haji can be considered as the most outstanding scholar during the 19th century because of his numerous volumes of writings which touched on various topics. Although there were also some rulers and scholars who produced *Pantun* (poems) and *Syair*[17] regarding various events, there were none like Raja Ali Haji in terms of the breadth of knowledge's. Hence, this really makes the researcher very keen to provide a new insight of the old knowledge to the modern world.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Many reviews and writings regarding the works Raja Ali Haji have been made in both contemporary and classic period of time. This is understandable given the significant contents of his writings that can be passed through different areas. Their reviews will be discussed in this study because the capability of extracting the important points

[17] Sham, 6

directly from the first sources is limited. Besides, there might be a lot of other points of view from other scholars that can be taken into consideration. The researcher divided them into four categories:

1. History
2. Islamic Philosophy
3. Sufism or Tassawuf
4. Language

History is one of the important fields in understanding human kind. Thus, every philosopher must possess the knowledge regarding what happened in the past especially in the world context. Raja Ali Haji has several works on it namely *Tuhfat Al-Nafis* (*The Precious Gift)* and *Silsilah Melayu* Bugis (*Malay and* Bugis *Geneology*). As far as the researcher is concerned, these two are the only adequate historical writings in the 19th century in Malay world. Below are some of the examples of the reviews on his writings:

Anthony Reid and David G. Marr in their book entitled "***Dari Raja Haji Ali Hingga Hamka"***, had briefly explained about Raja Ali Haji. The book mentioned about the rise of The Johor-Riau Sultanate, its Sultans, the dispute over the throne and others. They also stated that during Raja Ali Haji`s time, the westernization of cultures was happening. However, the book elaborated more on Hamka instead of Raja Ali Haji. Thus, the details provided are insufficient. The amount of information only suffices to the extent of getting the idea of who Raja Ali Haji is and the duration of Raja Ali Haji's life (when does he live, etc.).

Raja Ali Haji Budayawan Di Gerbang Abad XX (Raja Ali Haji's Cultural Figure on the Eve of the 20th century) was the work of Hasan Junus. It is a book with more than 300 pages that narrates the early life of Raja Ali Haji and his writings. The author did not provide evidence in claiming certain events and some of the facts given

can be questioned such as the date of birth of Raja Ali Haji and other date of important events.

Pemikiran Sejarah Raja Ali Haji Menerusi Tuhfat An-Nafis (2015) (Raja Ali Haji's Historical thinking in *Tuhfat An-Nafis* is written by Arba`iyah Mohd Noor. This article gives adequate information on the facts of the early life of Raja Ali Haji and also throughout his life. However, the main content of this writing is his two written works which are *Silsilah Melayu*-Bugis and *Tuhfat An-Nafis*. This source contributes a lot to the research in search of information regarding scholar views on his writings. Arba'iyah (2015) also detailed on most of the parts of *Tuhfat An-Nafis* (The Precious Gift).

Politik Dan Pentadbiran Era Kesultanan Johor Sehingga Abad ke 19 written by Mardiana Nordin (2015) elaborates on the Sultan and their capitals. The article elaborates more on the development of the Johor-Riau kingdom. It also elaborates in detail, on the history of marriage, lineage and controversies among the Sultans. However, the writer did not write anything about the intellectual conditions during the period. She also did not state anything about the Bugis family and their role during the sultanate. Thus, this article only suffices for the introduction to the history of Johor.

After knowing the context of certain events that had happened, one should know the lessons that can be derived from the events that happened. The lessons can be categorized as philosophies. Many Islamic sciences contain philosophical elements. The field of Islamic philosophy in present day seems to be regarded as knowledge, especially by the upper class of society but in fact, this kind of knowledge is very important in determining the direction and aim of a Muslim country. Below are some commentaries made by contemporary scholars on the philosophical and historiographical dimensions of Raja Ali Haji's works:

Raja Ali Haji Pemikir Ulung Alam Melayu (Raja Ali Haji the Great Thinker Malay World) edited by Arba`iyah Mohd Nor and Mohd Hanafi Ibrahim (2015) consists of the compilation of articles written by many local scholars. It starts with "***Raja Ali Haji: Kecendikiawan Dan Kepengaranganya (Raja Ali Haji His Intellects and Autorship)"*** which was written by Siddiq Fadzi in 2015l. He started the article with the brief history of Raja Ali Haji and his background[18]. He then commented that Raja Ali Haji is one of the earliest Malay Historiography writer. Siddiq also commented about the area of writings of Raja Ali Haji which are history, political thoughts, religion, and others[19]. Another scholar named Khalif Muamar Haris wrote an article title "***Sistem Kehakiman Islam Dalam Karya Raja Ali Haji"*** (The Islamic Judicial System in Raja Ali Haji`s Writings) which elaborates on Judicial Kingdom of the sultanate. This is considered as an adequate source because the information provided is thorough (from the sources to the elaboration). The article puts an emphasis on the "***Thammaratul-Muhimmah Dhiyafatul Lil Umara Wal Kibriya Li Ahlil Mahkamah"*** *(The Desired Fruit for The Rulers and Elites)* on Islamic constitutionality[20]. The book suggests that a country should put the *Maqasid As-Shariah* (The Objective of The Shariah) as its direction and all of the important designations should be given to those who are really qualified in terms of religion and worldly knowledge. Khalif Muamar Haris concluded his writing by stating that *Thammaratul –Muhimmah* is the best constitutionality book during Raja Ali Haji's time[21].

Tassawuf or the possession of *Adab* are the elements needed by all levels of society. A lot of contemporary Muslim philosophers do agree that *Adab* is the reflection

[18] Arba`iyah Mohd Nor and Mohd Hanafi Ibrahim, *Raja Ali Haji Pemikir Ulung Alam Melayu Abad ke 19*, (Petaling Jaya, Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, 2015),1
[19] Nor and Ibrahim, 3,7,14.
[20] Ibid, 51.
[21] Ibid, 59.

of a good Muslim. Raja Ali Haji hence propagated this in the form of *Gurindam*, *Syair* and others. One of the articles compiled in this book is "***Aspek Kesufian Dalam Karya Raja Ali Haji*** (Sufism Aspect in Raja Ali Haji`s Work) written by Ahmad Zaki Abdul Latif and Fairuzah Basri written in 2015. The writers stressed and pinpointed the bad character that a leader should avoid like being stingy, procrastinate , being arrogant and some other bad qualitiess[22]. Raja Ali Haji was also greatly influenced by the great Sufi scholars, Imamul-Ghazali and this can be seen in his writings. This writing may prove that Raja Ali Haji was a Sufi and *Tasawuf* propagator in the Malay world just like many of his literary predecessors. However, the writer does not include the name of his teachers, place and books that were used in the teaching process. The researcher has to study about them from some other sources in order to complete this part. This article may also not be sufficient enough to support the arguments but only enough for the researcher to get to know the influence of Raja Ali Haji.

Language plays an important role in refining civilization. The fall of language indirectly leads to the fall of a civilization. Raja Ali Haji was an expert in the science of language and this has been acknowledged by his successors. "***Bahasa Melayu Sebagai Wadah Dakwah Dan Tarbiah Dari Kaca Mata Raja Ali Haji"*** (Bahasa Melayu as Means of Da'wah and Education from the Perspective of Raja Ali Haji) was written by Norfazila Hj Abdul Hamid who analysed how he used language as a medium of *da'kwah*. We can see that he used high Malay language in *Tuhfat An-Nafis*[23]. There are also some great reviews about the *Syair*. This article is very useful in enlightening the researcher on how important the Malay language for Raja Ali Haji was and also on the

[22] Ibid, 29.
[23] Nor and Ibrahim, 203

ways he used it to propagate *da`wah*. Besides, a lot of good reviews were given towards the *Syair* and *Pantun* of Raja Ali Haji and this is beneficial for future purposes.

Another good review on the *Gurindam 12* was made by Zubir Idris from *Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysi*a. It specifies certain parts of the *Gurindam* mainly on the *Adab* or manners. The article titled "***Komunikasi Moral Lewat Gurindam Dua Belas Raja Ali Haji*"** (Moral Communication through the Gurindam 12) is divided into 4 chapters that elaborated the obligations of parents towards their children, obligations of children towards their parents, manners of speaking and bad prejudice. However, this article only consists the elaboration of the *Gurindam* 12 and not the other *Syair* while this research will involve mostly both of his *Gurindam* and *Syair*. Another source titled "***Aliran Dan Tokoh Bahasa Melayu"*** (The Method and Figure of Malay Language) written by Siti Nor Khizad provides enough information regarding the scenario of Malay Language during his time from Za`ba's respective.[24] It contains the details about the functions of Malay language, the divisions in it and how Za`ba had contributed to the modern Malay language in some aspects. *"**Pembangunan Bahasa Melayu Pendekatan Raja Ali Haji"*** (The Progress of Malay Language According to Raja Ali Haji's Approach) written by Juwita Abu Samahah is an analysis for the Malay language development especially by Raja Ali Haji in his "***Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa"***. The writer studied the history of Malay language back from the 17th century until present day[25]. This study is adequate for the researcher to gain knowledge on Malay language particularly. The author had organized the contents accordingly and enables readers to get the information clearly.

[24] Siti Nor Khizad, *Aliran Dan Tokoh Bahasa*, 3
[25] Juwita Abu Samahah, *Pembangunan Bahasa Melayu Pendekatan Raja Ali Haji*, 17

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will adopt the qualitative method similar to other historical studies. It will analyse sources from the period of Raja Ali Haji in depth. For the secondary sources, this research will use the writings from the renowned scholars from this field to get enough information. A deep research will be done regarding Johor-Riau kingdom and Acheh kingdom. A lot of contemporary views regarding the subject will be used as the skills needed to inteprate directly from the primary sources are very hard.

A lot of sources can be found in IIUM and ISTAC library. There are also sources taken from University of Malaya library named "*Pusat Akademi Melayu*" such as the *Gurindam 12* and its elaborations. Below are the sources that are referred to in this study:

Primary Sources - There is a lot of Raja Ali Haji's writings that can be used in this research namely:

Tuhfat Al-Nafis

This book is a historical book which focuses on the history from the era of *Johor* sultanate. Each topic has discussions in a very detail manner but it is quite difficult to comprehend in the present day because of the language transition from 19th century until today. Raja Ali Haji`s reflections are sometimes included in the middle of the writing.

Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa

One of the earliest *Malay-Jawi* dictionaries ever written. Raja Ali Haji used *Bahasa Melayu* as his medium for preaching[26] Islamic messages which can be seen in his books and *Syair*. Just like his other writings, the book starts with a brief introduction about

[26] Nor and Ibrahim, 194.

Tauhid and Sufism. The early perception of the writer is that these are the main concerns of sciences in Islam.

Thammaratul Muhimmah Diyafatun Lil Umara Wal Kibriya Li Ahlil Mahkamah

The title translated to English means "Desired Outcome for the Rulers and Elites at Their Place". This book contains the information on the political structure that should be constructed according to the Islamic rulings. Raja Ali Haji provided some evidences based on the Quran, Hadith and also from the Malay traditions. A lot of good political advices can be obtained from this book. It can be seen that one of the reasons he wrote this book was the rulers at his time had started to abandon Islamic values and fought each other. Raja Ali Haji had first introduced the meaning of sultan and rulers according to the Al-Quran and their roles[27]. This source also uses a very high level of Malay or *Jawi* language.

Silsilah Melayu* Bugis *(The Ancestry of Malay and* Bugis*)

This is a book that is very similar to ***Tuhfat An-Nafis (The Precious Gift)*** in general. However, this book focuses more on the Bugis family instead of the history of the whole kingdom of *Johor-Riau* in ***Tuhfat An-Nafis (The Precious Gift)*.** Raja Ali Haji narrated the story of the famous five Bugis warriors in most of the chapters in the book. There are also descriptions of certain events in a very good sequence. For example, the warrior with the Raja Kechik from Siak was written from the time of the arrival of the Bugis in Johor and continued with when Sultan Sulaiman appointed them as *Yang DiPertuan Muda*. There is also information about the other Bugis clan in Makssar and their stories.

[27] Raja Ali Haji, *Thamaratul Muhimmah Diyafatun Lil Umara Wal Kibriya Lil Ahli Mahkamah*: (Taman Melawar, Khazanah Fataniyah 1999) 3

Another significance of this book is that it narrates the history of the Bugis royal family who had travelled all over the Malay Archipelago. They went to some parts of Kalimantan, Java, Sumatera and other regions. They married the local rulers. The writer continued to narrate how the Bugis families were accepted as guests in most parts of the Malay Archipelago. He also proves that one of the five Bugis warriors died in a war with Raja Kechik from Siak in Kedah. His name was Daeng Prani. This shows some contributions of the Bugis descendants towards Malay world. They managed to have a good relationship with the local rulers and some of the rulers made the Bugis as their sons-in-law. The writer also mentioned the brotherhood between the Five Bugis warriors. This can be seen in the events of Daeng Menambun helping his relative in Kalimantan[28].

Kisah Pelayaran Ke Riau (The Voyage to Riau)

Written by M. A. Fawzi Basri as a short diary. This diary was written when Sultan Abu Bakar ordered a group of people consisting of Ungku Haji, Encik Wan Abdullah, and Datuk Bentara[29]. The aim of the voyage was to solve the problem of cultural matters in Johor and they were assigned to give a letter and get the answers from Raja Ali Haji[30]. This source will be used in answering the research questions. Another significance of this source is that this material does not come from Raja Ali Haji but someone else who deals with him. The researcher may get enough information about the other kingdoms and people's perceptions towards him as a scholar.

[28] Mohd Yusof Md. Nor, *Salasilah Melayu Dan Bugis*, Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn Bhd, Petaling Jaya,1984, 235
[29] M. A. Fawzi Basri, *Warisan Sejarah Johor*, Persatuan Sejarah Johor, Kuala Lumpur, 24
[30] Ibid., 24

Surat Von De Wall (Von De Wall's Letter)

This is the complete review about the four letters from Raja Ali to Von De Wall. It was written by a Dutch person named Jan Van Der Putten from the University of Hamburg. This article however, does not show the real handwritten letters in the form of *jawi*. However, there are complete translations of all the letters. The discussions in these letters were mainly about the Malay language. This is a good source for the researcher as it can be another proof that Raja Ali Haji was an expert in the Malay language.

1.8 CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter 1

This chapter will outline the different components of this research. It will discuss statement of problem, significance of the study, research methodology, research questions and etc. This chapter is the insight of the whole thesis.

Chapter 2

Some aspects of Raja Ali Haji's life progress and people who were around him will be studied. The researcher also will highlights the previous Malay intellectual scene in Malay world. This chapter will further discusses on what are the themes or genres of his various writings. Some of these themes are interconnected to others.

Chapter 3

This chapter will elaborate on what were the reasons for Raja Ali Haji's writings. Each of his writings will be properly segregated and scholars' commentary on them will be

analysed. This chapter may also touches on the history of Johor and the political and social condition.

Chapter 4

This chapter will discusses on the receptions of Raja Ali Haji's writings by other scholars during his time and after his death. The birth of a printing press which influenced by Raja Ali Haji will be examined. His credibility of scholarship will be viewed from other people's prespectives.

Conclusion

The gap of research will be filled and the summarization and some solution to the problems occurs will be detailed in this topic. The researcher intends to provide a new insight and view about the old Malay intellectual tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EARLY MALAY SCHOLARS AND THE WRITINGS OF RAJA ALI HAJI

This chapter begins with a discussion on the early Malay intellectual scene and the works produced by Malay scholars before Raja Ali Haji came to the picture. Among them are those written by 17th century scholars such as Nuruddin ar-Raniri, Hamzah al-Fansuri and Abdul Rauf As-Singkeli. This discussion is important as it gives the readers an insight into the intellectual tradition in the Malay world from which Raja Ali Haji emerged from.

2.1 THE EARLY MALAY INTELLECTUALS

The early Malay intellectual scene can be traced from the 17th century[1]. As the Malaccan Sultanate began to fall, traders started to turn their attention towards Aceh. From /the researcher's point of view, Johor should have been the natural economic and intellectual heir of Malacca in the 17th century. However, Johor was unsuccessful at assuming this role because they were heavily invested in efforts towards reclaiming Malacca from the Portuguese. Apart from that, they had their own internal strife which manifested in endless civil wars. Instead, it was Aceh that arose as the economic and intellectual Malay centre of the 17th century[2].

[1] Ali Mohamad, "*Peranan Ulama Dalam Memartabatkan Tamadun Islam Di Nusantara: Tumpuan Terhadap Abdul Rauf As-Singkeli*", *Journal Al-Tammadun,* Bil 4, 2009, 82

[2] Ermy Azziati Rosli "*Ottoman-Acheh Relations In Bustan-As Saatin*", *Mediteranan Journal Of Social Sciences*, Vol 5 No 9, December 2014, 1

Aceh was also diplomatically connected to the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire.[3]As a result, this proved to be a conducive breeding ground for the making of scholars such as Syeikh Hamzah al-Fansuri, Syeikh Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani, Syeikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri and Syeikh Abdul Rauf As-Singkeli[4]. These scholars would become highly respected by the society and rulers of that time. Some of them were even given high positions in the kingdom as in the case of Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri. These scholars were also the pioneers of Sufism, or *Tassawuf*, in Aceh.

Beginning from the very first century of Islam in the Malay Archipelago, the teachings of *Tassawuf*, or *Tarekah*, became widely spread, especially the thoughts of Ibn al-Arabi. These teachings assimilated with local ideas and the community embraced and adopted Sufi cosmology[5]. *Tassawuf* was divided into two schools of thought. The first one was the school of *Wujudiyyah* which propagated the belief that when man attains a certain spiritual level, all he sees around him is, God. Such a concept proved to be controversial, even to this day, and especially for people who are unfamiliar with Sufi concepts, as some would erroneously assume that what it actually means is that *everything is* God. The scholars who were of the *Wujudiyyah* School would include Hamzah al-Fansuri and Syamsuddin as-Sumtrani, who was his student. The second school of thought was called the *Syuhudiah* and the pioneer was Syeikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri. The scholars of the *Syuhudiah* considered the doctrines of the *Wujudiyyah* to be heretical and during the reign of Sultana Taj ul-Alam Safiatuddin Syah (1612-1617) were fully focussed on refuting them. The following sub-chapters will briefly discuss some of the manuscripts written by the scholars of both schools.

[3] Ibid, 1
[4] Hasib Rosyadi "*Tassawuf Falsafi Di Indonesia: Hamzah Fansuri dan Syamsuddin Sumatrani*", 1
[5] Ibid, 1

2.2 BUSTAN US-SALATIN FI DZHIKRIL AWWALIN WAL AKHIRIN

The title can be roughly translated into the "Garden of the Kings in the Recollection of The Past and Present". This is the work of Sheikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri[6], who travelled to Aceh during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Thani. He was ordered to write it in 1638. *Bustan* is a voluminous work which consists of seven books with a total of 60 chapters. The books are: The Creation of Heaven and Earth (Book I, 30 chapters); Prophets and Rulers (Book II, 13 chapters); Just King and Wise Ministers (Book III, 6 chapters); Ascetic Rulers and Pious Saints (Book IV, 2 chapters); Unjust Rulers and Oppressive Ministers (Book V, 2 chapters); Noble, Generous Persons and Brave Men (Book VI, 2 chapters); and Intellect, Medicine, Physiognomy, Women, etc. (Book VII, 5 chapters). *Bustan* is not only the largest work of al-Raniri but also the longest text written in the history of traditional Malay literature (consisting of seven books with 1250 pages).

The significance of *Bustan* as a book of history in17th century Aceh lies in the fact that al-Raniri was the pioneer of the concept of universal history in Malay historiography. With this concept, al-Raniri had initiated a new form of Malay historical writing. According to al-Attas, al-Raniri broke the tradition of Malay history writing as *Bustan* differed from the previous works on history in the aspects of content and writing technique. In *Bustan*, al-Raniri succeeded to narrate chronologically universal history starting from the creation of the universe, on to the stories of the prophets and the former kings, the Islamic caliphate and ending with the Malay Kings in Pahang and Aceh. It is interesting to note that al-Raniri intentionally aimed to include the history of the Malay kings as part of universal history and this effort is the first of its kind in the 17th century Malay Archipelago. Another significance of *Bustan* is that al-Raniri wrote the concept

[6] Norhayati Hamzah, "*The Contribution of Nuruddin Al-Raniri in the Field of History in the Malay-Indonesia World*", Department of Islamic History and Civilization Studies, University Malaya,2018, 227

of universal history with a didactic element in the framework of Islam. This point elucidates the significance of *Bustan* as a book of history particularly Islamic history of 17th century Aceh[7].

As time is very limited, it was not possible for the researcher to read the whole volume of *Bustanus Salatin* for the purpose of this study. However, it is interesting to learn that the book mentions that Aceh and the Ottoman Empire had diplomatic ties and were in contact with each other.

2.2.1 *Kitab Sirat ul-Mustaqim (*The Book of Straight Path)

This book was written by Nuruddin ar-Raniri. As far as this study has found, there was no other books on fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) written before ar-Raniri's time, making him a pioneer in the Malay World. Most of the books that were penned up to this time had been about Sufi metaphysics. It was much later that there emerged scholars from other parts of the Malay

World who would write on fiqh, such as Syeikh Arshad al-Banjari from Banjar in the 18th century. This was followed by other scholars in the 19th century.

Sirat ul-Mustaqim is a comprehensive fiqh book on *ibadat*[8]. It was widely accepted by *Shafiee* scholars. *Syeikh Arshad Al-Banjari* would later write *Sabilal Muhtadin lil Taffaquh fi Amri al-Din* as a complementary work to *Sirat Al-Mustaqim* since ar-Raniri's book was less accessible to people who were unfamiliar with the Acehnese language. Apart from that, *Sirat ul-Mustaqim* had not been carefully preserved due to mistakes by scribes copying the book down. The book contains seven

[7] Norhayati Haji Hamzah, Arba,iyah Mohd Noor and Tatiana Denisova, *"The Book of Bustanus Salatin by Nuruddin Al-Raniri as Historical Text:The Structure and Purpose Of Writing*", 31
[8] Jamaluddin Hashim and Abdul Karim Bin Ali, *"Kitab Siratul Mustaqim Oleh Syaikh Nuruddin Al-Raniri: Suatu Sorotan*", Department of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Darul Iman Malaysia, 10

major topics, 21 sub-chapters and 90 points. The main seven topics are *Kitab at-Thoharah* (Purification), *Kitab as-Salah* (Prayer), *Kitab Zakat* (Charity), *Kitab Sawm* (Fasting), *Kitab al-Hajj* (Pilgrimage), *Kitab al-Sayd wa Dzbaih* (Hunting and Slaughtering), and *Kitab al-Atimah* (Food). These comprehensive works on Fiqh by ar-Raniri and later al-Banjari, indicate and suggest to us that there was a vibrant scholarship, or learning, taking place in the old Malay World at that time.

2.2.2 *Syarabul as-Syiqin* (The Lovers' Beverage)

This book was written by Hamzah al-Fansuri in Malay poetic forms such as *Syair* and *Pantun*. Many of these poems contained Acehnese words and thus the researcher has used other scholars' interpretations to understand the work. However, some of these poems such as the well-known *Syair Perahu* and *Syair Dagang*, which are about the temporary nature of life, were more familiar and comprehendible.

He stressed on the importance of adhering to the Shariah in daily life. By knowing which acts are obligatory (*wajib)*, recommended (*Mustahab)* and other *hukm* (rulings), and with sincere intentions of carrying them out with the guidance of a proper *shaykh* (master), the seeker will be able to know the real meaning of life and who is his Creator. Hamzah al-Fansuri began the book by explaining that Allah cannot be described in any possible way. However, His attributes such as *al-Hayy* (The Living), *al-ilm* (The Knowing) and others can be understood by man and this is the beginning of the path in knowing Him. This stage is called *La Ta`ayun* (indescribable). Al-Fansuri then continues to discuss the subsequent stages on the spiritual path.

As alluded to earlier, Hamzah al-Fansuri was a very controversial figure due mainly to his metaphysical elucidation about the cosmos and how it exists as one with God. This is known as *Wahdatul Wujud*. And as mentioned earlier, this was fiercely

contested by Sheikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri. Hamzah al-Fansuri gave an analogical explanation for this concept:

1. The sea exists, and so do the fish and other sea creatures. Without the sea, all of the sea creatures would cease to exist.
2. The light of God (*Nur Ilahi)* can be thought of as the light given out by the sun. The moon also seems to be giving out light when it shines beautifully at night, but the light is merely a reflection of the sun.

God in the metaphysical construction of *Wahdatul Wujud* is like two sides of a coin. On one side are His attributes, which can also be seen in the cosmos. This is called *tasybih* (similarities). However, neither is He anything like whatever is in this cosmos, and this is called *tanzih* (transcendence). He is both *Az-Zahir* and *Al-Batin*, or apparent and hidden. The Sufi scholars has this term called *Tajalli* which means that God put His attributes in creation with the exact amount and place. Only *al-insan* (human) has the highest capacity to receive His *tajalli*. This is alluded to in the Al-Quran where God Himself asks the mountain if it wants to receive the trust from God and to which the mountain declines. This is why man is the noblest of God's creatures because he has accepted this trust.

2.2.3 *Tarjuman Mustafid* (The Beneficial Translation)

This is the first completed translation of the Quran in the Malay language. It is the work of Abdul Rauf Al-Singkeli, another scholar from Aceh in the 17th century. This translation was also based on other translations (*tafseer*) such as *Tafsir Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'wil* or also known as *Tafsir al-Baidawi*. Unlike today where modern technologies and tools have made the task of translating much easier, translation

undertakings during that time were laborious and translators would have had to be a master of both languages.

This *tafseer* proved to be immensely beneficial for the Malay people, both laymen and students of knowledge, as it was their access to the Arabic al-Quran in their own mother tongue.

2.3 RIAU-LINGGA SULTANATE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Before delving deeper into the discussion, the researcher would like to highlight that the kingdom of Riau-Lingga and Johor were separated by the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824. Part of what this treaty also entailed was that the Dutch surrendered Malacca and other lands to the British, and in return the British gave them Bengkahulu and other parts of Sumatra[9]. Sultan Abdul Rahman assumed power in Riau-Lingga, while Sultan Hussein was the ruler in Johor which also included Singapore and Pahang[10]. What is relevant to our study is to know that Raja Ali Haji lived under the leadership of Sultan Abdul Rahman in Riau-Lingga, which proved to be a more conducive environment for scholars to thrive.

2.4 RAJA ALI HAJI'S WORKS: AN OVERVIEW

As previously discussed, Raja Ali Haji produced many works and he wrote in Jawi. Everything that he wrote had an apparent, but also subliminal, message. The hidden meanings of his work could only be accessed and appreciated if one has a philosophical background. The reason or pushing factors for his writings will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[9] Ibid , 7

[10] Siti Syahirah Binti Mustafa and Nurfizilla binti Mohd Kassim, "*Perjanjian Inggeris Belanda 1824 and Perjanjian Pangkor 1974",* Fakulti Kemanusiaan Seni Dan Warisan, Universiti Malaysia Sabah,8

2.4.1 *Tuhfat an-Nafis* (The Precious Gift)

Tuhfat an-Nafis means "the precious gift" in Arabic. There were very few primary historical sources that existed in the Malay World in the 17th and 18th century. The closest one is called *Sulalatus Salatin* (The Chain of The Kings) written by Tun Sri Lanang. The book gives accounts of *Sang Sapurba, Demang Lebar Daun, Hang Tuah, Hang Jebat, Tun Perak, Temasik* and other important historical personalities, places and events of the Malay world.

Tuhfat an-Nafis is a complex and reliable historical source. As far as the researcher is concerned, there is no a more comprehensive book on history about the Malay World that was produced between the 18th and 19th century. It is considered an encyclopaedia of Malay life as it narrates the everyday life of the Malays and the Bugis, as well as the wars that happened in the Malay Archipelago[11]. This text is also unique in that it gives exact dates to the events according to the Hijrah calendar. They are ten in number.

The writer begins the book with praises to God and His messengers. He then records the important events that relate to the Malay sultans and the Yamtuan Muda of Bugis between the mid-17th century until the 19th century[12]. For Raja Ali, the retelling of these events are only important for the lessons they teach us on ethics, *iman*, culture and knowledge, as these are vital matters for a country and society. He argues that one of the main reasons for the fall of the Malay kingdom during the 18th and 19th century

[11] Norain binti Ismail "*Peperangan Dalam Historiografi Johor: Kajian Terhadap Tuhfat An-Nafis", Jabatan Sejarah Dan Tamadun Islam Usuluddin*, Akademi Pengajian Islam, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 2011-2012, 5

[12] Makmur Haji Yahya, Mohd Kasturi Nor bin Abdul Yahya and Sitti Rachmawati Yahya, *"Historiografi Manuskrip Nusantara: Analasis Sejarah Dalam Tuhfat An-Nafis Dan Sulalatus-Salatin*", Fakulti Komunikasi Dan Bahasa, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Pusat Pengajian Pembangunan Insan & Telekomunikasi, Universiti Malaysia Perlis and Fakulti Pengajian Sains Dan Maklumat, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 5

was due to the behaviour of the Malay sultans themselves who did not possess these character traits. They were too occupied with gaining power instead of focussing their efforts on the advancement of society. These conflicts were inevitably exploited by the Dutch and British. The peak of this crisis came when the Anglo-Dutch treaty was signed where Johor and Riau-Lingga were divided and would never merge again. Raja Ali Haji points out that a good case study on the importance of ethical rulers is the story of Raja Kechik from Siak[13].

Generally, Raja Ali Haji describes the efficiency of the Bugis in managing problems by prioritising rationality. Furthermore, he argues that Bugis leaders behaved in more ethical and Islamic ways compared to the Malay kings during the colonisation by the Europeans. As proof to his argument he points out the birth and vibrancy of Pulau Penyengat as an Islamic centre. In contrast, there was a complete absence of Islamic writings produced, and of either schools or scholars in Johor.

As a work of history, philosophy and ethics, *Tuhfat an-Nafis* discusses the problem of when a leader no longer acts according to the Shariah. A good king should follow the advice of the scholars and not his own selfish desires, as this restricts the advancement of the intellect. What would be the result of this are calamities that would befall the country, and its people who have put their trust and hopes on such a leader. Raja Ali Haji opines that a king should not be anointed based on his lineage alone. Rather, he should be chosen based on his knowledge, especially knowledge on religion (*fardhu ain*), history, law, etc. He should also commit to frequent discussions, and seek counsel, with Islamic scholars (ulema) to be able to sustain a harmonious Islamic state.

[13] Ibid, 5

2.4.2 *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* (The Book of Language)

Before getting into a deep discussion of this book, the researcher intends to provide readers with some brief information about the significance of language that readers, who are more familiar with modern works, might be unaccustomed to. The learning of the Arabic language started from even the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and this was then carried on extensively by scholars after his death. The reason for this is because the Quran was revealed in the highest form of Arabic literature and grammar. Thus, a person must have a good grasp of the language in order to derive true knowledge from the Quran. As a result, there have been scholars in Islam who dedicated their lives in preserving the language by producing the renowned dictionaries ….. the tradition has immensely benefitted from such as *Kitan Al-Ain* by Al-Khalil (died 160 A.H), *Jamrah* by Ibn Duraid (died 321 A.H), and *Lisan Al-Arab* by Ibn Manzyr (died 711 A.H), just to name a few.

According to Hashim Musa[14], language is not only about the vocabularies, part of speech, grammar, literature and poetry but also about bringing identification and "putting things at the right place" of every single thing in this realm. The researcher also would like to add that language is also used to deliver knowledge eloquently and precisely from one party to another. Errors and misunderstandings in learning language can be minimised by understanding its theoretical and practical applications.

According to Prof Syed Naquib Al-Attas[15], the strength of the Arabic language can be classified into three categories:

1. The root words of each word in Arabic comes from a verb;

[14] Hashim Musa and Rozita Che Rodi *"Raja Ali Haji: Cendekiawan Ulung dan Pemikir Besar Merentas Zaman"*, International Journal of The Malay World And Civilization, Volume 5, 2017, 17
[15] Ibid, 17

2. The Semantic structures of the morphology of words are in a consistent pattern; and
3. The vocabularies, meaning, grammar and prosody are kept in the Quran and Hadith (Prophetic traditions) as for constant use throughout time.

As for this, the Arabic language is the best form of language and is able to deliver the precise meaning of something, especially that which involves the truth. History is proof for this statement as other languages such as English and Malay have evolved over time. Modern day language users may not understand their language in their classical forms. Conversely, anybody who speaks and understands modern day Arabic would also easily be able to understand the meaning of the Quran and Hadith. This is in line with the verse of the Quran in Surah Yusuf, verse 111:

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

Translation: We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an, in order that ye may learn wisdom

Raja Ali Haji in the book says that the first letter in the alphabet Jawi is *"Alif"*. The examples of words given for the letter were "Allah", "Ahmad", "Ashab", "Ahbar", "Insan", "al-Awwali" (al-Dunia), and "Akhirat". To the general public, these seven examples may not present anything significant. However, people who have an Islamic philosophical background would be aware that what he is trying to tell the readers is that these words have cosmological and ontological implications[16].

The first word is "Allah" which is the Supreme Being and the source of the existence of all things. He is the *Wajib ul-Wujud* (The Source of Wujud) while other

[16] Hashim Musa and Rozita Che Rodi *"Raja Ali Haji: Cendekiawan Ulung dan Pemikir Besar Merentas Zaman", International Journal of The Malay World And Civilization*,Volume 5,2017,16

than him are all *mumkin* (that which cease to Exist). He is the highest being in the hierarchy of all things and all depend on Him (*Iftiqar*).The second word is "Ahmad" which is another name for our Prophet (peace be upon him) who brings good news for the believers and bad news for the disbelievers. And his message is universal.

The next word is "Ahbar" which means the scholars who have inherited the knowledge and ethics of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They are the ones who are entrusted to propagate Islam to the world. Without them, the world would come to an end[17]. The next word is "Insan" which means the human being, who naturally comes with the body, soul and intellect. He is the only one who can carry out religious duties and will be compensated on the day of judgement based on his deeds in this world.

The sixth word is "al-Awwali" or "ad-Dunia" which means the place where Allah manifests his *Sunatullah* (The Way of God) upon all his creation. This world is the place where all of one's deeds will be accounted for. The last word is "Akhirat" which means the end of the journey and of deeds. According to Islamic belief, one's worldly life ends right after the soul (*ruh)* has been extracted from the body and enters into a realm called *"Barzakh"*. These souls will then be gathered in *Mahsyar* (The Gathering Place). They will then undergo several more stages and will be given the result of their actions and deeds by Allah who is never unjust. Only then will they know whether they are of the *ahl-Shaqwah* (the tormented) or *ahl-Saadah* (the blessed).

Although the words given as examples are few, but they encompass everything, from God to His creation. This could be a subliminal message from Raja Ali Haji where he is indicating what should be given prominence in one's early education, instead of

[17] Ibid, 16

other trivial matters. Believing in these concepts allows a Muslim to arrive at the station (*maqam*) of *Iman*, whereas to reject it is unbelief.

This is how Raja Ali Haji approached and achieved all his great works. On the surface the content may be concise and simple but embedded within in it is a profound meaning. This is parallel to one of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) character which is "*Jawamiul Kalim*" (having short,precise and meaningful speech). The approach in modern education is different, as quantity of work is preferred over quality.

2.4.2.1 Views of Other Scholars on Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa

Let us now look at the views of other scholars on Raja Ali Haji's book to provide fair and just comment. There are two categories of critics: orientalists and local scholars. Local critics have a favourable view towards the book while the orientalists do not.

The trouble with the orientalists is that they do not fully understand the indigenous intellectual and literary culture of the Muslims. They criticise without carrying out proper research. For example, it is stated that in *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* "… is rather a sort of unsystematic encyclopaedia". This statement may be true, but only if we have the same worldview as them. They might have the assumption that a dictionary must only contain the definition of words. However, the Muslims believe that language is a part of the religion as Allah revealed His revelation through the form of language as discussed earlier.

On the other hand, local scholars have given fair comments about the book. Za`ba (1940) said "….an encyclopaedia of the author`s general knowledge, opinions and impressions, set forth under the words he professes to define...". While T. Iskandar said (1964) "*Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* is a general encyclopaedia which contains general knowledge, opinions and preference of the author of the words intended...".

The copy of *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* that the researcher has referred to in this study was printed and published in 2002 by Khazanah Fathaniyah.

2.4.3 *Bustanul Katibin Li Sibyan* (The Garden of Novice Writers)

As far as this study has gathered, of Raja Ali Haji's works, scholars have only engaged with *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* and *Bustanul Katibin* (The Garden of Novice Writers) of which we will look at now. This may be due to a lack of attention by scholars to his other writings. The researcher did not manage to get a copy of *Bustanul Katibin,* thus only other scholars' commentaries were relied upon. Therefore, the readers should take note that these are assumptions and research based on secondary sources, one of which being an article written by Hashim Musa and Rozita Che Rodi titled *Raja Ali Haji: Cendikiawan Ulung Dan Pemikir Besar Merentas Zaman*.

In Islam, the Muslims believe that the Quran is a revelation from God revealed in a high linguistic form in the Arabic language. Hence, it has become a tradition where those who want to study Islam must, at the very least must know basic Arabic grammar. Among the subjects they would have to study are *Nahu (*synthesis), *Sarf* (morphology), *Qawaid* (grammar), *Istidlal* (derivations), *Kalam* (argumentation) and others. These branches of knowledge must be mastered to become a good Muslim scholar[18].

Bustanul Katibin is similar to *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa (The Book of Malay Language)* where both are mainly about language. These books are priceless as they are the legacy of the old Islamic tradition in the Malay World. In the beginning of this book, Raja Ali Haji mentions that language is the platform for which to embark on the quest of attaining true knowledge[19]. Therefore, using his own benchmark of what the path for

[18] Hashim Musa and Rozita Che Rodi "Raja Ali Haji: *Cendekiawan Ulung dan Pemikir Besar Merentas Zaman", International Journal Of The Malay World And Civilization*,Volume 5,2017, 14
[19] Ibid, 14

true knowledge is, we can say that Raja Ali was indeed on this path since he actually wrote on the discipline of the Malay language itself, or also known at that time as *Bahasa Jawi*. This makes him an outstanding scholar of his time.

2.4.3.1 The Impact of Bustanul Katibin and Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa on the Malay Language

According to U. U. Hamidy (1981)[20], these two books were the references during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in schools located in Riau, Johor and Singapore. As previously discussed, Raja Ali Haji stressed that language mastery should be the basis of gaining knowledge and that there are precise ways of learning it. Generally, philosophers have always stated that language is the foundation of knowledge as it creates a morally upright and ethical person. This is perhaps why Raja Ali Haji also stressed on true cosmology and ontology in his writings. He believed that this would save Muslims from the confusion of being entangled in a worldly outlook on life rather than a celestial one.

The researcher does not agree with the statement of Teeuw (1961) who mentioned that Raja Ali Haji's writings can be considered as "… a distant offshoot of Arabic language...". Perhaps being unfamiliar with the scholarly tradition of the Malays, Teeuw might not have been aware that Raja Ali Haji was not the first one who infused Arabic grammar into Malay. It had always been the tradition of Malay scholars to do this, such as can be seen in the works of Syeikh Hamzah al-Fansuri in the 16th century, Syeikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri in the 17th century, Syeikh Arshad Al-Banjari in the 18th century and so on.

[20] Ibid, 19

The reason why the scholars of the Malay Archipelago adopted Arabic grammar into the Malay language was to preserve the precise content and meaning of each word from the original Arabic. To translate the words without preserving the grammar would corrupt the meaning and critical information would be lost. Therefore, Teuuw's assessment can be considered inaccurate. However, it can be said that Raja Ali Haji wrote both of these books because he might have felt that the Malay language was deteriorating.

2.5 SUFI MESSAGES

This study is also about unearthing Raja Ali Haji's thematic writings and his subliminal messages. The major themes that this study has uncovered in the author's writings are language, philosophy and Sufism. This sub-section will discuss the Sufism of Raja Ali Haji in some of his works. It is in this author's aspect of his work that we find his exhortations on the loss of *adab* and the collapse of ethics.

2.5.1 Sufism Messages in Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa (The Book of Language)

As previously discussed, this book is about language but due to the vast knowledge of the writer, he embedded heavier themes within it. He warns of bad *akhlak* (character) and mentions of how unfortunate it is for one to be ignorant (*jahil),* or worse, being unaware that he is ignorant (*jahil murakkab).*

He emphasised on the destruction that ignorance can have on the individual and society. Ignorance in this context means being unaware of the true role of the human

being; knowing God and His messenger, the reality of the world and hereafter[21]. Such ignorance will cause one to be incapable of using his intellect and his *iman* would waver.[22]

The author offers an answer on how to avoid ignorance. The answer is to seek knowledge from those who are qualified, to seek their companionship, as doing this will help us maintain our morality. Even from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), this has always been the traditional approach of how Islamic scholars taught on how knowledge should be sought.

Raja Ali Haji then describes how important it is for leaders to be virtuous and to have *adab* since their followers' fate are in their hands. The worst things a leader can be called are *zalim* (unjust), *bodoh* (stupid), *lalai* (negligent) and *penakut* (coward)[23]. These *akhlak mazmumah (bad attributes)* would definitely influence their decisions, and bad decisions have disastrous effects on the people they lead, the economy and security of the state, etc.

Raja Ali Haji opines that the worst of these names that can befall a leader is *zalim (unjust)* and conversely the best name a leader can be called is *adil (just)*. This raises the question as to what are the criteria of a just leader? The Islamic definition of the word "just" contains within it the meaning of a deed which puts something at its proper place (or doing something at its right place and time), as according to the Quran, *sunnah*, *ijma* (Consensus), *qiyas* (Reasoning) and other sources. This kind of person will not decide something based on his desire, lust, or other whims and fancies. It is important to possess good ethics and to guard one's self from being influenced by one's

[21] Raja Ali Haji, *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa,* Khazanah Fataniyyah, Kuala Lumpur, 1996, 14
[22] Ahmad Zaki Abdul Latip and Fairuzah Basri, *Aspek Kesufian Dalam Karya Raja Ali Haji*, Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, 2015, 27
[23] *Ibid.,* 28

lower desires. Raja Ali Haji then divided good ethics or *Akhlaq ul-Karim* into nine categories:

1. Ethics before Allah
2. Ethics before Teachers
3. Ethics before Students
4. Ethics before Parents
5. Ethics before Family and Helpers
6. Ethics before Relatives and Friends
7. Ethics before Acquaintances
8. Ethics before Ministers
9. Ethics before the General Public

For the purposes of this study, we will only discuss the first two:

Ethics before Allah

This is the most important of all the ethics. It would be unjust (*zalim)* for one to uphold good character around his or her fellowmen while failing to fulfil his duties to God Himself. The person who was able to do this at its fullest was the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was reported that he never worshiped idols even before revelation came down to him, even though it was the norm of the society he lived in. His ethics was so perfect in terms of himself and his interaction with other people that he was given the nickname *al-Amin,* which means "the trustworthy one". According to Islam, justice or *adil* means to put something at its proper place according to God's order. If a person is unable to be just towards God, i.e. not practicing the Shariah and having good conduct (*Adab)*, how can he be just towards other people, what more in a larger scale such as in politics, financial management, education and others?

In the *Bustanul Katibin*, Raja Haji Ali's advice on ethics towards God is not any different from what he had written in other works. Below is an example of what he wrote on this matter:

> *"Kita hendaklah menundukkan kepala, merendahkan diri, dan menghimpunkan himah kepada-Nya, dan mengekalkan diam dan mendiamkan segala anggota, dan menyegerakan mengerjakan suruhan-Nya dan menjauhi tegahan-Nya, dan sedikit berpaling daripada takdir-Nya. Dan hendaklah mengekalkan zikir dan melazimkan fikir akan kebesaran-Nya dan kemuliaan-Nya, dan melebihkan yang Haq dan putus asa, iaitu tidak mengharap daripada makhluk."*[24]
>
> Translation:
>
> "We must submit ourselves [to His command], preparing our body to do goods, and peform His injunctions and restrain from evil deeds according to the religion and be pleasure/pleased with His certainty. We must also practice *dzikr* regularly to glorify Him and do not put our hope on other than him"

Ethics before Teachers

In Islam, it is necessary for both teachers and students to practise good behaviour towards each other to foster a harmonious intellectual environment. This is why it is important for the teachers or *muallim* (in Arabic), to become a student first before becoming a teacher. He needs to learn *adab* and acquire adequate knowledge first before spreading it to the public. Knowledge in Islam can be learnt through an unbroken chain of students and teachers who are connected to the Prophet (peace be upon him), who is the person at the top of this chain. He is the first teacher of *adab* and knowledge as he received revelation from God. In short, a teacher needs to adopt the conduct of the Prophet himself, especially with his students. Apart from this, it is also worth mentioning that another important aspect of spreading knowledge in Islam, is that a

[24] Ahmad Zaki Abdul Latip and Fairuzah Basri, *Aspek Kesufian Dalam Karya Raja Ali Haji*, Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, 2015, 27

teacher should put aside his pride and admit that he does not know when he encounters a question he does not have the answer to. Pretending to know and spreading false information is dangerous in the pursuit of knowledge. Raja Ali Haji wrote:

> *"Jika kita memperoleh ilmu yang dikurniakan Allah Taala, adapun adabnya hendaklah kita melazimkan hilm (lemah lembut) yakni tiada pemarah dan menanggung barang yang disakiti oleh orang yang jahil-jahil, dan duduk dengan kelakuan yang hebat yakni jangan berguru-gurau yang mengurangkan maruah sama ada perkataan atau kelakuan, dan meninggalkan takbur yakni membesarkan diri atas hamba Allah Taala melainkan kepada orang yang zalim kerana (untuk) mengherdik mereka itu."*[25]
>
> Translation:
>
> "If we have been blessed with knowledge, it is a must for us to be tolerant, to control our anger and be patient with the ignorant. Do not behave boastfully, and mock either by words or actions. We must also put aside our pride except towards the oppressors in order to put them in their proper place".

The quotation above clearly shows that a teacher must practice good ethics, especially during the teaching and learning process. This was the tradition of Islamic teaching and learning.

2.6 LANGUAGE

As for Raja Ali Haji who mastered the Arabic language, it was natural for him to adopt Arabic literary styles in his writing of the Malay language as previously discussed. This made his approach to Malay grammar quite different compared to 20th century scholars such as Za'ba and Alisjahbana[26].

[25] Ibid, 27
[26] Musa and Rodi, 20

2.6.1 Language Eloquence in *Tuhfat an-Nafis*

The eloquence of his language can be seen throughout this book and here's an example of this:

> *"Alkisah maka tersebutlah Yang Dipertuan Muda Daeng Kemboja serta Raja Haji Kelana di dalam negeri Riau. Maka tiadalah lain perkataannya melainkan membesarkan perniagaan di dalam negeri Riau. Maka datanglah beberapa buah perahu dagangan dari jauh datanglah kapal-kapal*[27] *dan kici-kici dari Benggala berpuluh-puluh buah, dan dari China datang pula wangkang-wangkang kepala hijau dan kepala merah berpuluh-puluh buah, datang pula tobtob dari Siam membawa beras dan lainnya dan perahu Jawa demikian juga apa lagi perahu dari Bugis dan apa lagi perahu-perahu dari rantau-rantau, bercocok ikanlah di dalam Sungai Riau dari Kuala sampai ke Hulu Riau. Maka berpalu'-palu'lah dagangan Cina dengan dagangan Jawa dan demikian juga berpalu' dagangan Jawa dengan dagangan Riau seperti gambir. Maka banyaklah saudagar-saudagar Cina apa lagi Bugis banyaklah yang kaya-kaya. Maka pada masa itu banyaklah orang-orang kaya Riau."*
>
> Translation:
>
> "It was narrated that Yang Dipertuan Muda Daeng Kemboja and Raja Haji Kelana did some business in Riau. There were a lot of small boats from Benggala and China brought their trade. While the Siamese and Javanese brought rice and the Bugis did some agriculture from the The River of Riau to *Hulu* Riau.The business activities were doing great with their own commodities like *Gambir* (Gambier.There were a lot of rich Chinese and Bugis. Riau ran a good economical activities."

2.7 PHILOSOPHY

Every Muslim should possess sufficient knowledge in Islamic philosophy. It is considered as *fard al-kifayah.* This means that there must be representatives in a Muslim community who are up to this task lest everyone in that community is considered blameworthy. Theology (*kalam),* epistemology, sociology are but some of the categories of philosophy. The most important aspect of philosophical knowledge is that a person is able to know the hierarchy of things.

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[27] Ahmad Zaki Abdul Latip and Fairuzah Basri, *Aspek Kesufian Dalam Karya Raja Ali Haji*,Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, 2015, 27

2.7.1 Philosophical Content in Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa and Bustanul Katibin

Raja Ali Haji successfully expounded on language while being philosophical in these books. Although a book like *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* is in essence a dictionary, it however contains subliminal philosophical elements to its readers.

The researcher managed to trace philosophical elements especially in the books *Thammaratul Muhimmah* and *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa*. We will discuss *Thammaratul Muhimmah* in greater detail in the next chapter. Let us now have a look at a quotation from *Bustanul Katibin* where he discusses the connection between language proficiency and behaviour. He stated in page three of the book:

> *"Adab dan sopan itu daripada tutur kata juga asalnya, kemudian barulah kepada kelakuan … Bermula apabila berkehendak kepada menutur ilmu dan berkata-kata yang beradab dan sopan, tak dapat tiada mengetahuilah dahulu ilmu yang dua, iaitu ilmu wa al-kalam (pengetahuan dan pertuturan). Adapun kelebihan ilmu wa al-kalam amat besar sehingganya mengata setengah hukama` segala pekerjaan pedang boleh diperbuat dengan qalam (pena), adapun pekerjaan qalam tiada boleh diperbuat dengan pedang… Ada beberapa ribu dan laksa pedang yang sedang terhunus, dengan segores qalam jadi tersarung, terkadang jadi tertangkap dan terikat dengan pedang sekali …"* [28]
>
> Translation:
>
> "*Adab* and good conduct originate from good speech, from which good acts will follow. A person can only begin seeking knowledge by having good behaviour. Those are the two main sources of knowledge we call *wa al-kalam.* The advantage of having this is immense to the point that the scholars have said that all of the work of a sword can be carried out by a pen (intellect), whereas the work of a pen cannot be carried out by a sword. Alas, thousands of swords can be sheathed with a pen (intellect) and sometimes they are even stifled by it."

From the researcher's point of view, Raja Ali Haji wanted to tell people of the importance of the intellect and its superiority over physical weapons. In today's modern

[28] Raja Ali Haji, "*Bustanul Katibin Lisibyan",* Khazanah Fataniyah , Kuala Lumpur, 3

context the majority of people may be confused as to the sort of knowledge we ought to seek. Without real (religious) knowledge, we are nothing in the sight of God. The means to attain this real knowledge is through language[29] and no matter how high the rank and status of a person is in a community, he is still nothing in the sight of God if he has no religious knowledge.

He then continues to explain that every matter has its own degree. The highest degree of all is of course Allah because He is the creator of all things. Without Him, all other things will cease to exist. Next comes the Prophet (peace be upon him) who surpasses even the angels in rank. This is called the science of the classification of knowledge.

He wrote in *Bustanul Katibin:*

> *"... Tiap-tiap perkara itu ada yang terlebih besar dan yang kecil, ada yang tinggi ada yang rendah, ada yang mulia ada yang hina, ada yang halus ada yang kasar... Maka didahulukan yang terlebih besar daripada yang kecil, didahulukan yang tinggi daripada yang rendah... Perkara agama lebih tinggi daripada perkara dunia, dan perkara kerajaan lebih tinggi daripada perkara perniagaan... Perkataan buang air besar dan buang air kecil terlebih mulia daripada berak dan kencing, dan perkataan Tuan hamba lebih halus daripada awak dan lu."*

Translation:

> "…Every single thing has its own degree, there is the greater and the lesser, the high and the low, the noble and the abased, the refined and the coarse … Hence, greater things must be prioritised over lesser things, the higher over the lower. Religious matters have to be put ahead before worldly matters, and state affairs should be placed above personal ones. The expressions *buang air besar* and *buang air kecil* are more couth than to say *berak* and *kecing*, and the word *Tuan hamba* are gentler than *awak* and *lu*."

Raja Ali Haji expounded on this because he wanted to show that there is always a noble way to speak and behave. Muslims must be aware of the degrees of things so

[29] Musa and Rosdi , 15

that we do not prioritise the bad over the good. Having good manners in speech is the pathway towards having overall *adab.* He continues:

> *"Bermula perkataan dalam surat perkiriman itu maka hendaklah dimulai dengan bismil-Lahi r-Rahmani r-Rahim, kemudian alhamdulil-Lah yakni memuji Allah ta`ala pada nama munasabah dan waqi`, kemudian selawatkan Nabi kita serta keluarganya dan sahabatnya, kemudian diiringi Salam ta`zim… pada orang yang berkirim surat."*
>
> Translation:
>
> "The beginning words of a letter must be *Bismillahirahmanirahim* and followed by *Alhamdulillah* and then praising Allah using other relevant names of His. Next, we ask Allah to bless (*salawat*) the Prophet (peace be upon him), his family and companions, and thereafter we express our good wishes for the reader."

In this chapter we have tried to show how studying the works of previous scholars – especially having an appreciation of their Sufi background and how it influenced their beliefs and teachings – is crucial towards understanding further the intellectual and literary works of Raja Ali Haji. Only through a proper appreciation of this can the following chapters be fully understood.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF RAJA ALI HAJI

This chapter examines the political thought of Raja Ali Haji based on one of his well-known works, *Thammaratul Muhimmah*. This chapter shows that his political ideas were in line with previous philosophers of the Islamic world such as Ibnu Khaldun, and how he tried to apply these ideas to the Malay World.

In order to overcome some of the difficulties in reading the text, due to the classical Malay vocabulary and overall language used by the author, the researcher needs to rely heavily on a commentary by Khalif Muamar Harris entitled *Ilmu Ketatanegaraan Melayu Raja Ali Haji*. Raja Ali Haji wrote in an old form of Jawi – the script, grammar and vocabulary are unfamiliar to the researcher. Hence, an interpretation of an accomplished scholar like Khalif Muamar Harris is necessary to rely on in order to comprehend the classical work.

3.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ISLAMIC GOVERNMENTS

It is important to understand that an Islamic government framework had already been a concept discussed by previous scholars of Islam starting from the very first century of the Hijrah. It is crucial to understand that all forms of knowledge in Islam can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and that each generation of Muslims built upon the legacy of knowledge and ethics based upon the previous generation.

There was a brief discussion about the history of Islamic framework of politics and governance in the previous chapter. Let us now delve deeper into this. In the Islamic

scholarly tradition, there were terms put forward to describe the field of knowledge that discusses politics and society. Such terms included *maddaniyah* and *hadhari*. But perhaps the best term that most accurately describes this field is *ilm umran* (the knowledge of civilisations) coined by *Ibn Khaldun* which he derived from the Quran.

3.1.1 The *Umran* (Civilization): Theory and Its Source

Before we delve even deeper into *Thammaratul Muhimmah*, it is important to have at least some brief understanding about the concept of an Islamic kind of government. Although it is not written anywhere in the book of *Thammaratul Muhimmah* about the *Umran*, the concept is clear throughout the book, for example: the emphasis on ethics; of noble speech; upholding and implementing the *Shariah*, etc.

Linguistically, the word *umran* is derived from the Arabic letters "A", "Ma", and "Ra" which imply to command or prosper. Thus the term alludes to having good fortune, affluence, industrialisation, knowledge, ethics and other positive aspects of spiritual and material development[1]. The father of sociology *Ibnu Khaldun* who lived in the 14th century, divided society according to several levels. They are:

1. *Qaryah* (village) or *Misr* (city), which have their own agricultural means of producing their own food. They also have their own industrialisation system.
2. *Bilad* or *Dawlah*, which are a combination of a few *Qaryah* or *Misr*. The society here can comprise of people of different religion, language, race and culture.

[1]Mahayuddin Haji Yahya "*Umran Dan Aplikasinya Di Alam Melayu"* Journal Antarabangsa Alam Melayu, Volume 6, 2013, 4

3. *Umran* means "prosperity" linguistically. However, the technical meaning is for a state that possesses: prosperity, technological advancement, knowledge, wealth, and a large population of working citizens.

There are two main sources to be considered in order for the *Umran* to be achieved. The first one is the natural resources that we all cannot live without such as air, land, water, etc. The second one is culture, which includes religion, ethics and knowledge. The citizenry are only the actors on the stage which produce history from the resources and are proof of the *Umran*. According to Mahyudin[2], the difference between the Greek civilisation and the Islamic *Umran* is that the focus of the Greeks were only on material aspects of development, and like today's current leaders, neglected religious or spiritual progress.

3.1.2 The Influence of *Umran* in the Malay World

The most obvious aspect that can be seen from the influence of *Umran* is religion. But it also includes the pattern of politics, culture, the economy, music, the justice system, philosophy and others. Of course, Islam encompasses every aspect of life from the upper to the lower classes. There is actually a lot to discuss on other aspects of the *Umran* such as the arts, culture, economic activity and more. However, due to the limitation of this study, we only focus on the three of the most important aspects of the *Umran* which had an impact on the Malay World.

3.1.2.1 The Umran and its Adoption in the Malay World

By holding and practicing *tawhid* (unity of God) and adopting *Umran*, the Malay world slowly left idolatry and embarked on an intellectual culture. The Malays adopted

[2] Ibid, 9

Asharite theology, practised *Shafiee* jurisprudence *(madhab)* and were heavily influenced by the *tassawuf* of al-Ghazali and Ibnu Arabi. The adherence to these religious principles permeated everyday and political life, for example Shariah rulings were applied to every aspect of life.

The second aspect of *Umran* is ethics. Islam changed the way the Malay people behaved and interacted with each other. The early *tassawuf* movement can be traced to the 15th century manuscript *Durr al-Manzum* written by Maulana Abu Ishq. *Tassawuf* then continued to spread from Aceh during the 16th and 17th centuries with scholars such as Hamzah al-Fansuri, Nuruddin ar-Raniri, Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani and others.

Among the paths towards praised ethics (*Akhlaqul Karimah)* was by joining a *tarekah* (sufi order). Through the Tarekah, a teacher (*Murabi)* would teach the disciple to restrain from adopting a worldly and lavish lifestyle. All deeds were to be dedicated to God. And this could only be accomplished through constant remembering (*dhzikr)* and sometimes isolation (*suluk)* in order for the soul to be strong enough in facing worldly hurdles.

The third aspect of the *Umran* concerns politics and law. The Sultanate replaced the previous Maharaja kingdoms of the Malay Archipelago. The rulers were now bound by the *Shariah.* The sultan was now responsible for spreading the teaching of Islam, and he would do this for fear of facing a difficult afterlife. Shariah laws were implemented as evidenced by artefacts found such as the *Batu Bersurat Terengganu* dated to 1303, and other known documents of law like the *Hukum Kanun Melaka, Hukum Kanun Brunei, Kanun Makhota Alam (Kanun Acheh), Hukum Kanun Pahang, Undang-Undang Riau, Undang-undang Kedah* and others[3].

[3] Ibid, 24

3.2 THE INTELLECTUAL CULTURE OF RIAU-LINGGA

The main reason why an intellectual culture could flourish during Raja Ali Haji's time was because of the encouragement and patronage by the ruler. We know that foreign Muslim scholars were brought into Pulau Penyengat evidenced by the graves found in Pulau Penyengat. Apart from this there is also the letter from *Yang Dipertuan Muda* IX Raja Abdullah, which says:

> *"Jangan engkau semua tiada mendengar ajaran ulama dan shuhada'. Jika engkau tiada kuasa menuntut kepadanya. Maka jika engkau kuasa menuntut, maka inilah yang sangat gemar dan tuntutku."*
>
> Translation:
>
> *"The least that you can do is to listen to the teachings of scholars and martyrs. If you are able to seek knowledge from them, then this is what I prefer the most."*

Raja Abdullah was a master (*Khalifah)* of a Sufi *tariqah* himself and he sought knowledge from none other than Raja Ali Haji and would eventually go to Mecca. It was reported that he continued to expand his knowledge by learning from other renowned scholars of the Malay Archieplago such as Syeikh Ismail Minangkabawi, Syeikh Arshad Al-Banjari, Syeikh Abdullah Fathani and others. Raja Ali Haji's advice to the rulers was not to go against the scholars as this was like going against the Prophet himself. This advice was adhered to by the Riau-Lingga ruler and ministers of that time and informed the intellectual climate and identity of the region.

Raja Ali Haji came from an intellectual and aristocratic background and as elaborated in the introduction of this study, Raja Ali Haji received his early education in Mecca when he was 20[4] while he was on a pilgrimage with his father Raja Ahmad. His father was a wise and intelligent minister, and even a poet, who wrote *Syair* such as

[4] Ibid, 83

Syair Engku Puteri, Syair Perang Johor and *Syair Raksi*[5]. Interestingly, according to Virginia Matheson[6], he was actually the one who began the writing of *Tuhfat an-Nafis.* Other scholars dispute this fact however, and insist that Raja Ali Haji himself wrote the book in its entirety starting in the month of *Sya`ban* 1282 Hijrah and completing it in *Rajab* 1283 Hijrah.

3.3 THAMMARATUL MUHIMMAH

As mentioned earlier, the most important work of Raja Ali Haji on Islamic governance and politics is *Thammaratul Muhimmah*. Therefore, in order to deeply understand his political philosophy, we should examine closely some of the key points of the work and his ideas towards the framework of Islamic governance. In the book, he included examples of good leaders and how to apply their leadership style. Being an elite and advisor to the Yamtuan Muda, Raja Ali called leaders to the real teachings of Islam and to apply it in every aspect of life.

The book contains three main chapters and seven sub-chapters. The book must have had to some extent influenced the political and legal culture of the Malay kingdoms. For example, it had a considerable influence on the drafting of *Undang-Undang Tubuh Johor* of 1895[7], which we will learn about later.

The introduction of this book is about the concept and function of knowledge. Raja Ali Haji defined what knowledge is and what its role in Islam is. Knowledge can be divided into two in Islam which are '*naqli'* (revealed) and '*aqli'* (intellect)[8].

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[5] Harris , 83
[6] Virginia Matheson & Barbara Watson Andaya "*The Precious Gift*", Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1982
[7] Ahmad Zaki Abdul Latip and Fairuzah Basri, *Aspek Kesufian Dalam Karya Raja Ali Haji, Raja Ali Haji Pemikir Ulung Alam Melayu Abad ke 19*, Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, 2015, 28
[8] Raja Ali Haji, *Thammaratul-Muhimmah Dhiyafatul Lil Umara Wal Kibriya*,Khazanah Fataniyah,Kuala Lumpur,2000, 3

Revealed knowledge is based on the Quran and Hadith while the intellect is derived from the human mind.

The second chapter is about the character traits that leaders ought to possess. The following chapters in the book are about how to elect, topple, and interact with ministers, judges, and governors, and so on and so forth. Our summarisation of the whole book can be categorised into several parts which are going to be discussed now.

3.3.1 The Art of Leadership

A leader, (*amir* in Arabic) is a person who is entrusted with power and wealth upon his shoulders and thus the one who is responsible for the wellbeing of his subjects. *Amir* is mentioned several times in the Quran and Hadith whether in positive or negative lights. In the past leaders led by example, now it seems that leaders are judged only by the effectiveness of their rhetorical skills. One would be hard pressed to find a leader who actually practiced what he preached. From Raja Ali Haji's writings, it is clear that he had his ideals on good leadership and politics. Politics from his perspective is not just about power and how to retain it, but more importantly it is a means by which Muslims should use to elevate themselves spiritually, and to please the Creator. In contrast, we can see today that the political field has become a wrestling arena where opponents are at each other's throats. As a result, it is impossible for a civilization or country to move forward and thrive. In such dire conditions, wealth, time and power only go to waste.

According to Imam al-Ghazali[9], politics is very important to determine the perfect order of the world (*Nizam Ad-Dunya)* and management of worldly life is important for the purpose of practising religious duties. For instance, the cultivation of

[9] Khalif Muammar A. Harris *"Ilmu Ketatanegaraan Melayu Raja Ali Haji*", Dewan Bahasa Pustaka,Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur,27

knowledge requires attention and care from the leader practically in terms of budget and legality. Without the right leader with an appropriate background of knowledge, the development of such knowledge cannot be fostered. As can be seen, the current Muslim world is under the influence of secularism whether they realise it or not, and the biggest infiltration of this influence is reflected in education. This education does not consider the chain of transmission (*isnad)* with its roots to the Prophet. As a result, the *maratib* or degree of knowledge is in total disorder.

In addition, *adab (*good ethics) is not practised in the education system and this will only produce workers with questionable ethics. Hence, it is important for a ruler to possess the right educational background as to maintain the harmony of his kingdom. This is also to ensure that they are guided in their decisions as wrong decisions will only result in loss of resources and time and this will negatively impact the people.

Another thing highlighted by Raja Ali Haji is that a leader ought to avoid schisms. Schisms can occur when leaders are only concerned about holding on to power. Disunity (*Adawah)* will only bring more harm than benefit. He instead proposed the concept of love (*Syafaqah)* where this is in line with Allah's commandment. He says:

> *"Kerana alamat Raja yang adil itu, harimau dengan kambing boleh sepermainan apalagi isi negrinya. Adapun, alamat raja yang zalim itu anak dengan bapanya berbunuh-bunuhan."*
>
> Translation:
>
> "The sign of a just leader is when a tiger and goat can play together … While the sign of an unjust leader is when killings occur even between father and son."

Raja Ali Haji tried to emphasise that real politics deal with ethics, providing the right education and upholding just laws. Nowhere in his book does he discuss material development even though Islam does not have anything against the pursuit of wealth.

This is because matters related to ethics and justice take prominence over material gain, and whoever prioritises these nobler matters will succeed in the material aspects as well. As history has shown, this is how great civilisations were born.

3.4.2 The Knowledge Culture

Knowledge is the most important aspect in shaping a civilisation. Without the correct worldview, the application of knowledge will be in disorder. Discord in knowledge results in discord of thinking and as a result society, just as in today`s modern world, will be in disarray. The most essential way of knowing the correct path to knowledge is to know the concept laid out in the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*Usul Fiqh)*; the *Fard ul-Ain* (Individual Obligatory) and *Fard ul-Kafai* (Community Obligatory). All historians and philosophers whether Muslim or not, agree that in order for a community to move forward, knowledge is crucial. However, the question that arises here is what kind of knowledge should we uphold? According to Western philosophers like Hegel, the only knowledge needed is the *Dzahiriyah* (technologies). In contrast, Islam insists that both spiritual and material knowledge are needed in building a civilization. And these must be based on revealed knowledge. The highest peak of a civilization is when the people are advanced in their inner growth (*Ruh* and *Adab).* It is interesting to note that Raja Ali Haji does not mention the outer, or material aspects.

The opening part of *Thammaratul Muhimmah* is about knowledge. This indicates to us that the highest priority of a civilisation just as was discussed by his reference Imam al-Ghazali is knowledge. This research will show that[10] it is clear that

[10] Wan Mohd Saghir Abdullah. *Koleksi Ulama' Nusantara*. Kuala Lumpur.Khazanah Fattaniyyah,2009, 2:13-16.

the *Johor-Riau* government of his time prioritised knowledge. Raja Ali Haji sent a letter to *Yang Dipertuan Muda* IX Raja Abdullah, which says:

> *"Jangan engkau semua tiada mendengar ajaran ulama dan shuhada'. Jika engkau tiada kuasa menuntut kepadanya. Maka jika engkau kuasa menuntut, maka inilah yang sangat gemar dan tuntutku."*
>
> Translation:
>
> "Do listen to the scholars. The least you can do is to listen to the teachings of scholars and martyrs. If you are able to seek knowledge from them, then this is what I prefer the most."

This depicts that political decisions were made on guided knowledge. This recommendation was taken seriously by some Malay rulers and nobles in Johor-Riau at that time. For instance, it is known that Raja Abdullah was a disciple in the *Tariqat Naqshahbandi* and was reported to have sought knowledge from renowned Malay scholars in Mecca during that time such as Syeikh Ismail Al-Minangkabawi, Syeikh Abdulah Al-Fathani, Syeikh Arshad Al-Banjari and others[11].Raja Ali Haji also advised the rulers to seek companionship with the right scholars. He advised that rulers and staff of the palace must respect the scholars as making enemies of scholars is like opposing the prophets themselves because the right scholars will brings the knowledge of prophet.

3.3.2 Building a Good Nation

Upon the concept of a nation, there are a few elements that come to mind about its main pillars. These are education, politics, the economy and the people. However, binding these elements together is the concept of justice. The concept of *adl (*justice) is different from the secular meaning of justice. Justice in Islam means putting things at their rightful place whereas in the secular version it means equality in division.

[11] A. Harris, Khalif Muamar , 35

Raja Ali Haji stated that we must allow the Quran and Sunnah to define for us the meaning of justice because reason alone cannot help us with this as there is always contextual difference. The proof of this can be seen in the ever changing laws of a community according to time and place. However, prayer, fasting, charity and other rulings in Islam have remained unchanged for 1400 years.

The concept of justice in Islam can be seen in the effects. The effects can only be seen when the foundations are laid and these are the principles derived from the Quran, Sunnah, Ijma and Qiyas. In the book of *Nasihat Al-Muluk* of *Imam Ghazali,* it is stated that the act of justice is the branch while the root is *Usul-Ad-Din (*The Principle of Deen). Without a firm root, it is impossible to get the desired branch and thus justice will not prevail[12].

Raja Ali Haji also stressed on giving attention to the right type of education. Education should not only manifest in material benefit, but that it also is able to produce an ethical individual. The importance of this kind of education comes into light when we see less crime being committed in a community. Strict laws and harsh punishments will only have temporary effects. This can usually be seen in the increasing number of committed crimes where strict laws are applied. Raja Ali Haji stressed the importance for governments to support this kind of education:

> *"Syahdan, jika mereka itu takut akan Allah Ta'ala serta bermalu dan bersopan dengan sebab ada ilmunya di dalam hatinya yang menerangkan badanya daripada membezakan baik dengan yang jahat maka iaitu diri sendirilah membuangnya dengan tiada susah dan payah di atas raja-raja dan orang besar-besar membuangnya dan demikianlah segala siyasat segala Anbiya dan Awliya[13]"*

Translation:

[12] Ibid, 42
[13] Ali,Raja Ali, *59*

> "Indeed, if they have the fear of Allah because of true knowledge that resides in the heart, which is able to distinguish between good and bad, then he will stop himself from committing crime without fear of punishment from the authorities … and that is the sincerity of Prophets and Saints."

3.3.3 Shariah-Based Government

Linguistically, Shariah means "the road". However, technically it means rulings that cover aspects of worship, transactions, marriage, criminal law, politics, etc. It was revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and there are some differences of opinion among the scholars regarding the branches (*furu)* but not the roots (*Usul)*. *Shariah* is placed on top of other rulings in an Islamic government. All other rulings that is against the *Shariah* would be automatically rejected. This is an act of justice (*adl*) since the lawmaker is God Himself and thus no biases would occur.

Raja Ali Haji stressed on the importance of a leader to uphold the *Syara'* as the law and to set aside individual interests and lust[14]. There is one chapter regarding this point where he says:

> *"Pada menyatakan hukum-hukum yang terpakai di Hukum Syariat, yang di dalam hadis Nabi Sallahu alaihi wassalama sudah dibayangkan maknanya, dan maksud dan mafhumnya dengan jalan yang teguh dengan ilmu naqli dan aqli."*
>
> Translation:
>
> "This chapter discusses the *Shariah* laws of the Prophet, peace be upon him, which have been thoroughly enumerated with the *naqli* (revelation) and the *aqli* (rationale)."

It is obvious to see that the Muslim world today suffers because it has failed to uphold the Shariah. Lots of injustices (*dzhalim)* have occurred as a result. This can be

[14] Ibid,47

seen in how criminal activities, divorce, corruption and other negative statistics in any country.

This is not to say that Islam totally rejects laws derived from the human mind. There has always been room for reasoning from even the time of the Prophet. Such rational judgements are done by qualified scholars and experts who are trained in the tradition. This is why we have the different schools of law (*Madzhahib)*. Each one of the madhahib has its own methodology of extracting and interpreting the law from the Al-Quran and Sunnah. This is why Raja Ali Haji said:

> *"Adapun hukum ijtihad masalih-ad-dunya yang mebaik-baikkan negeri dan meneguhkan kerajaan jika tiada jadi bid`ayah sai`yah (bidah yang tercela) maka iaitu ditilik di atas beberapa perkara ... pertama jangan jadi mudarat kepada nyawa dan badan ... kedua jangan malu aib orang, ketiga jangan jadi membawa kepada cacat Nama raja dan Nama menteri maka iaitu haruslah dipakai."*
>
> Translation:
>
> "As for innovation in knowledge which relates to the needs of a government, it has to be weighed on a few measurements. First it cannot be something that poses a threat to lives and cause bodily harm, second it must not compromise the dignity of people, third it must not give a bad name to the kings and his ministers. This kind of innovation of knowledge is permissible."

The above text shows that Raja Ali Haji derived this idea from the second *Maqasid As-Shariah* (Shariah Objective) which is the preservation of the soul (*Hifz Nafs).* The rules and jurisprudence that are constructed by the powers must consider the welfare of the people, the rulers, and every one's overall dignity.

This is one of the proofs that Islam encourages the growth of knowledge needed for the development of society, be it as it may with the conditions as stated above. The position of this knowledge is *fard al-kifayah* where it is incumbent upon the society, but not on any one individual. This innovated knowledge can be seen in the analogy of the use of salt in cooking. When the amount is too much, the food will be damaged. Raja

Ali Haji and other scholars gave the view that the authorities are entitled to exercise *Ijtihad* (rational judgment) in worldly affairs for as long as they do not contradict the religion[15].

The effectiveness of the Sharia laws has withstood the test of time. This should not be surprising to Muslims of course since these are laws given by God Himself. The five daily prayers, fasting, paying, charity (*zakah)* and other forms of rituals have been practiced by Muslims around the world without exception for more than 1400 years. They have not been modified or changed unlike the secular-derived philosophy of the *Tajrib (*experiments). Such experiments are always wrought with loopholes since its derivation comes purely from the human mind which is limited. Shariah rulings also do not discriminate between classes of people. Hence, even the king has to submit to it and this ensures that true justice can be achieved[16].

However, all such applications of the Sharia require as its basis and implementation a knowledgeable society; from the rulers and aristocrats to the workers and laymen. Thus, the expansion of true knowledge should be prioritised first so that everyone is educated as to why this kind of constitution should be in place and only then will there be willingness to adhere to it.

3.3.4 The Integration of Politics and Tassawuf

Tassawuf comes from the Arabic word that bring meanings of the pure or sacred. It is one of the pillars of Islam that every Muslim ought to have in his or her life. In this section of this study, we want to bring focus to how inner purity will reflect on the *adab* (ethics) of a person. This attainment of good character and ethics cannot be done by

[15] Ibid, 49
[16] *Thammaratul Muhimmah, 40*

merely reading or hearing about it, rather an individual must undergo training under a master of the path (*Tarbiyah)* which is chained and traced back to the most noble ethical being to have ever lived which is the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This acquirement of knowledge involves restraining oneself from all bad deeds. And rulers who also seek this path must avoid corruption, procrastination (*taswif),* being involved in argumentation, self-aggrandisement, being lustful and other traits which can affect society negatively and cause failure towards fulfilling the *Maqasid As-Shariah*.

The practice of bribing will not occur if leaders were to be elected from an ethical populous. Raja Ali Haji wrote in *Thammaratul Muhimmah,*

> "*Bermula hendaklah dipilih akan orang-orang akan hendak dijadikan ahl-mahkamah atau hendak dijadikan orang-orang besar yang lain daripada perkerjaan mahkamah maka hendaklah dipilih orang yang baik perangai lagi mempunyai maruah yang menaruh malu sopan dan beradab dan tiada bongkak, pongah pada perkataan atau kelakuan lagi berilmu lagi ghalib beramal dengan amal yang baik tiada suka pada perkerjaan yang ditegahkan oleh Allah dan Rasul-Nya daripada segala yang diharapkan*."

Translation:

> "Leaders or the elites must be elected for his ethics, dignity, not arrogance in terms of words and action. He also must posses adequate knowledge and practice it and did not commit actions that against the commandment of Allah and His Messengers"

According to the *Shariah,* leaders, from the top to the bottom, must be chosen based on their good character and not only on their knowledge and skills. Hence, it is written in *Thammaratul-Muhimmah* that a leader must pass certain criteria, which include; that they are Muslim, they are *Mukallaf* (having reached the age of puberty), they are male, etc.[17].

[17] Harris,57

The reason that *Thammaratul Muhimmah* was discussed here is because the ideas laid out in this book offers the theoretical solution to the present day problems whether in the field of politics, education, sociology or others. The principles that were discussed were the keys of success for previous Islamic governments.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RECEPTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RAJA ALI HAJI'S WORKS BY MALAY AND COLONIAL WRITERS DURING HIS TIME AND AFTER HIS DEATH

This chapter discusses the reception of Raja Ali Haji's works and thought in his lifetime and after his death. As we will see those who engaged with and benefited from his ideas were not just Malays; they were also colonial officers and Western intellectuals. From the analysis of some relevant sources, we can see that Raja Ali Haji's works were well received because as the saying goes, a true scholar with good ethics will have few enemies. This chapter also compares Raja Ali Haji's literary achievement with those of two notable Malay writers who lived after him, namely Hamka and Za'ba. The last section provides an overview of current scholars whose research are on the life and works of Raja Ali Haji.

4.1 THE COLONIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIS LANGUAGE SKILLS

The recognition of Raja Ali Haji's expertise in the Malay language by foreign scholars can be found in his correspondence with Hermann von de Wall. According to one source, the actual number of letters between them are in the hundreds but only a few survive. Von de Wall was a minister in the Dutch East India Company and worked on a Malay dictionary for the administration. He would become an expert on Malay (1807-1873) and came to the Archipelago as a cavalry sergeant in 1829. He made his way up the administrative career ladder via several posts in Borneo (1834-55). As Assistant Resident, he was commissioned in 1855 to compile a book on Malay grammar, as well

as Malay to Dutch and Dutch to Malay dictionary (Indisch Besluit no. 7, 2 November 1855). For the execution of this task he was posted to Riau (Indisch Besluit no. 13, 10 June 1856), where he died on 2nd May 1873[1]. His presence in Riau had a stimulating effect on the production of literary works, of which he collected many copies. As is apparent from some other letters in the collection under discussion (Leiden Cod. Or. 3388b), he was well-known and highly respected throughout the Malay World of the Peninsula, West Borneo and the Riau Archipelago. During his stay in Riau, he published several studies on the Malay language and one volume of his extensive dictionary (1872). After his death, an abridged edition of the dictionary as a whole was published in three volumes by Van der Tuuk (1877-84).[2]

The correspondence between him and Raja Ali Haji proves that the latter was an authority in the Malay language. In this study we have referred to four letters between Raja Ali Haji and Von de Wall. In their letters, Raja Ali Haji and Von de Wall discussed issues such as the standard for a formal letter, *Syair,* the word *Parindun* and others. The letters also resemble the form of formal language at that time. Other notes of interest are the use of the word *kekanda* (brother), the use of some Quranic verses such as *Qawluhul Haq* (Indeed the Words of Gods Are True*)*, the influence of Arabic grammar, and the reliance on the Islamic lunar calendar.

4.2 UNDANG-UNDANG TUBUH KERAJAAN JOHOR (JOHOR CONSTITUTION)

A constituition is a set of framework in a country which consists of law,politics and other important matters.This constittition is usually based on the worldview of the

[1] Al-Azhar and Jan Der Ven Der Putten , *Four Malay Letters from Raja Ali Haji to Von De Wall,* KITV Journals, Volume 148, 1992, 521
[2] Ibid, 522

society and this determine the direction of the country development. For example, the Malaysian constitution was based on the Reid constitution in 1957 which was originally a derivation from the *Perjanjian Persekutuan Tanah Melayu 1948*[3]. Johor had its own constitution in 1895 and it is called *Undang-Undang Tubuh Kerajaan Johor* (Johor Constitution) when it was under the rule of Sultan Abu Bakar.

The constitution was written in the Royal Palace in Johor Bahru in 14th April 1895.After 5 months of amendmend, the constitution finally was declared as an official constitution. It was based on many works of Islamic Jurisprudence (fiqh*)* and especially Raja Ali Haji's literary works. This includes the matters of *Majlis Mesyuarat Kerajaan Johor* (*Johor Council Party)*, as well as the matters of qualification and appointment of the Sultan of Johor, its ministers and others. The first chapter of the constitution clearly takes its lead from *Thammaratul Muhimmah*. It states that the ruling of electing a king is *fard kifayah*[4] and continues to explain the criteria of selecting them, which includes that they are Muslims, are of age of puberty, sane and others where this kind of matters are discussed in the fourth category of Islamic Law (*Fiqh Jinayyat)*.

The Johor Constitution also stipulates on matters relating to the position of kings. A king has always been someone said to be above the law, but the constitution states otherwise. A king from the perspective of Islam is someone who is entrusted with a position to spread Allah`s will on his land or better known as *Dzilullah fil Alam (*The Shadow of God on Earth). Hence, he can also be charged for wrongdoings.

The fifth chapter of constitution states that king must be from the group of *ahl-hal wal aqd* which means he has to be among the selected one and must posses a sufficient capability in governing the country.The constitution then refutes the old

[3] Bharuddin Che Pa, *"Pengaruh Islam Dalam Sejarah Penggubalan Undang Undang Tubuh Kerajaan Johor1895*", *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Volume 2, December 2007, 90.
[4] Ibid, 94

Malay understanding that a Sultan or king, will not be subjected to his country law. Quoting from Thammaratul Muhimmah, a king may be topple down because of several reasons such as *Murtad* (no longer in Islamic Faith), too lenient, insane, blind or deaf.

4.3 THE SCHOLARS AFTER HIS TIME

There were not too many contemporary scholars that were around during Raja Ali's time who had the same expertise as him in terms of language, philosophy and history. However, the researcher found two prolific Malay writers who lived after him that may be compared to him. They are Hamka and Za'ba.

Hamka

Hamka or also known as *Buya* Hamka was born in Sumatra, Indonesia in 1908. Hamka was an acronym from his full name Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah[5]. He was known for his poems, philosophy, religious knowledge and others. He started to join the congress of the *Muhamadiyyah* since the year 1928 and in his 20s he already managed to write his first novel titled *Si Sabariah*. It has been recorded that he wrote a total of 113 books. *Di Bawah Lindungan Kaabah* and *Tengelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* are among some of his famous novels. The former is about the love story of a Muslim couple while he wrote the latter to voice out the discrimination against people of mixed heritage in Minang society. He also had his own translation of the Quran called *Tafsir Al-Azhar*[6]. However, in the opinion of this researcher none of his works on philosophy, history and language can be compared to the calibre of work produced by Raja Ali Haji.

[5] Abdul Rahman Abdul Aziz, *"Nilai Mencapai Kehidupan Sejahtera: Pandangan Hamka",* Jurnal Pengajian Umum Asia Tenggara, Volume 10, 2009, 124
[6] Ibid, 125

Hamka's intellectual position, straddling and balancing between opposing views and proclivities, earned him hybrid descriptions, such as a "pioneer of neo-Sufism in Indonesia," "a mystical teacher," "a Sufi without *tariqah*," "a cryptic Sufi," "Salafist Sufi," "Sufi *sederhana*" (moderate Sufi) and "Sufi *berakal*" (rational Sufi), and a contributor "to the process of rehabilitation for the mystical path in Indonesian Islam."[7]

Za`Ba

Za`ba or Zainal Abidin Bin Ahmad was born in 1895 in *Negeri Sembilan,* present day-Malaysia. He received his early education in Sekolah Melayu Kuala Jempol, in Batu Kikir, Negeri Sembilan. He then furthered his studies in an English school named St.Paul Instituition[8]. An interesting footnote to add is that he was the one who suggested to add the letter 'N' to UMO (United Malay Organization) party and thus the name stayed until today making it the United Malay National Organization. Unlike Raja Ali Haji, he was a scholar that was involved in a nationalist movement towards modernisation instead of a religious one. He also produced a few writings. However, there are major differences between Raja Ali Haji and Za'ba in the linguistic field. Raja Ali stressed the importance of the original Jawi language and the Arabic Grammar *(Nahu*) as he stated in his book *Bustanul Katibin*. On the other hand, Za'ba lived in the age of transition of the Jawi inscription to the present day Roman alphabets. Thus, his focus was more towards preparing the Malay language as the national language.

There were no other scholars in The Malay World in the 19th century that were as intellectually and politically as influential as Raja Ali Haji. Apart from this, he also

[7] Kahirudin AlJunaid, *"Reorienting Sufism : Hamka and Islamic Mysticism in the Malay World",* Number 101, April 2016, 69

[8]Ermy Azziaty Rozali and Muhamad Redzuan Othman, *"Jalan Keselmatan Bagi Orang-Orang Melayu: Pemikiran Za`Ba Bagi Memajukan Pendidikan dan Ekonomi Orang Melayu Pada Tahun 1920`an",* Journal of The Department of History, Volume 18, November 2017, 20

followed the Islamic tradition of knowledge as per discussion earlier. The proof is in his writings. We can see that he stayed true to the *manhaj* or way of learning in his use of language; in how he clarified the definition of terms that were going to be used and the act of praising Allah and His messenger in the opening parts of his book. Thus, it is in this researcher's view that the two scholars (Hamza and Za'ba) cannot be put on the same pedestal as Raja Ali Haji.

4.4 CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS' VIEW ON RAJA ALI HAJI

There are many modern researchers who have studied the life and works of Raja Ali Haji and the relevance of his ideas in the modern world. Although Raja Ali Haji lived in the 19th century, the research on his works are ongoing. The researcher would like to mention some of these contemporary scholars who have dealt with Raja Ali Haji's thoughts and views.

Virginia Matheson

Virginia Matheson Hooker was Professor Emeritus and Fellow in the Dept. of Political & Social Change, College of Asia and the Pacific, at The Australian National University. She retired in 2007 and left a number of writings such as *A Short History of Malaysia* and *Writing a New History*. She also translated *Tuhfat an-Nafis* into English and wrote the preface with words of commendation for Raja Ali Haji.

Abu Hassan Sham

He is an independent researcher who has written extensively on history. Some of his works include *Syair-Syair Melayu Riau, Sastera Undang-Undang* and *Puisi-puisi Raja Ali Haji.* Most of his writings were published in the 1990s. The book *Puisi-Puisi Raja*

Ali Haji contains a lot of information on Pulau Penyengat, the ministers, scholars and Raja Ali Haji's *syairs* which are considered rare to the researcher and took a long time to compile.

Khalif Muamar Harris

He is currently teaching as lecturer in Centre of Advance Studies of Islam (CASIS) and can be considered as a contemporary reference point for Islamic philosophical studies. He wrote a review on Raja Ali Haji's books *Thammaratul Muhimmah* and *Muqaddimah fil Intizam Wal Wazaif Mamalik* which we have mentioned as an important source for this research. This book was published by Dewan Bahasa Pustaka in 2016.

Views from other scholars whether they were of Raja Ali`s time or the present day show that Raja Ali Haji was an outstanding scholar. The correspondence by Von De Wall was proof that Raja Ali Haji was sought out for his expertise especially in language and cultural matters. The early Johor legislative law was also derived from his book, although the law would only be established in about 50 years after his death. As we have shown, many commentaries and studies have been made on Raja Ali Haji`s works and this only serves to show how significant he is to the Malay World.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The Portuguese invasion of Malacca weakened Malay political and cultural supremacy in the 16th century. The Johor sultanate did not manage to revive the glory of its predecessor as it was embroiled in conflict with other kingdoms.The event continues for several centuries and demoralised the people of the Malay world. The condition became worse in the 19th century when the Dutch and British signed an agreement called the Anglo-Dutch treaty. As a result, Johor and Riau were divided and the British managed to extend their sphere of influence into the Malay Peninsula. Things were different in Aceh however, as the Dutch were unable to invade them until the 19th century because Acheh was guarded by Islamic thinking and knowledge.

Back to the 17th centuries, Acheh had a lot of great saints such as Hamzah al-Fansuri, Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani and Nuruddin ar-Raniri. They were revered and given patronage by rulers such as Sultan Iskandar Thani and this made them become influential in society. This study will show how works such as *Tarjuman Mustafad, Bustanul Salatin, Syarabul Asyiqin* were significant in sustaining the power of the Aceh Sultanate from colonial forces right up until the 18th century. Contemporarily it is difficult to find modern scholars who can produce such beneficial literary works that cover various fields of knowledge. The right knowledge like this acts as vanguard towards the society.

The above theory can be supported by the absence of significant literary and intellectual works in the Johor sultanate. Unlike Aceh, kings and ministers were constantly involved in conflict with one another. Although economically they were wealthy in the early period of the kingdom, it still met its downfall after war with Siak. This shows that the economy alone cannot maintain the stability and prosperity of a civilisation. Significant intellectual development in Johor-Riau can only be seen after the coming of the Bugis people. The Daeng family contributed a lot in elevating the

knowledge culture especially when Pulau Penyengat became the centre of knowledge. As a result of it slowly becoming known for its culture of learning, foreign scholars from Yemen and Mecca contributed to the island's further development. Evidence of this are the tombs of these scholars that can be found in present day Pulau Penyengat.

Raja Ali Haji emerged in the 19th century after two centuries of intellectual dormancy in the Johor kingdom. He wrote on the importance of building a civilisation based on the right belief and knowledge and how this will develop politics, the economy, just society, etc. These ideas can especially be seen in the early part of *Thammaratul Muhimmah* which is one of the main studies of this research. He contributed immensely during his lifetime to the field of knowledge and even had a hidden hand in the legal drafting of the *Undang-Undang Tubuh Kerajaan Johor*. As can be seen from his works on history, language and governmental frameworks, it is obvious that Raja Ali Haji's vision was to revive the intellectual glory of past Muslim civilisations.

Raja Ali Haji also tried to preserve and record Malay history since there was a scarcity of such writings in the Malay world. *Tuhfat an-Nafis* was the only detailed Malay work on history written between the 17th and 19th centuries. Knowing history is important in building an Islamic society as it gives lessons on the behaviour of a race and its culture. Learning from history teaches us to avoid mistakes of the past for future decision making. This is especially important for leaders.

In learning about history, or historical events, one must take into consideration the viewpoint of the narrative that is being told. Of course the viewpoints of the colonial masters and those of the colonialised people will be different. In studying Malaysian history we must try to base our study on books like the *Sulalatus Salatin, Malay History* (Sejarah Melayu), all of the *Hikayats* and other sources from other parts of the Malay

Archipelago, like Java. The oral history of the locals can also be considered as part of the research along with the textual sources. In reality, however, it is unfortunate that history lessons in Malaysia heavily rely on British sources. Unsurprisingly, the orientalists had a negative outlook on the sultanates of the Malay World.

Another important point to consider is our approach towards the knowledge itself. In Islam, knowledge of history generally is not subjected to all Muslims (*fard ain)* rather, it is subjected to society (*fard kifayah).* This is because such knowledge is only critical for Islamic scholars and leaders, not necessarily to every lay person.

The main thing that we can derive from the book *Thammaratul Muhimmah* is the need to build a good government based on Islamic principles. The Sharia framework is more or less like the concept of a constitutional government and limited government introduced by Western thinkers of the 18th century[9]. The West has always given the credit to the idea for this form of government to John Locke. However, many people are unaware, including Muslims, that the values and ideas of this kind of government had already been introduced by the Prophet in the form of the world's first constitution that is the *Shifat Al-Madinah*. This form of government continued under the rightly guided caliphs and the following generations but deteriorated in practice after some time with the emergence of despotic rulers. Scholars such as Al-Mawardi, Abu Yusuf, al-Ghazali and others urged rulers to adhere to this kind of government. In the Malay world, Raja Ali Haji took up this mantle. Under this kind of law, even kings can be charged and sacked if he went against the Sharia. However, implementation of this can only be done if both leaders and those that are being led have proper religious knowledge.

[9] A. Harris, Khalif Muamar, 49

The concept of knowledge in Islam is different from the concept of knowledge in the West. The West, which is secularised, classifies knowledge according to worldly benefit. In Islam, every kind of knowledge is based on religious knowledge. Knowledge serves as the intermediary between man and God. God does not accept an act (*aml)* without adequate knowledge. This is what Raja Ali stressed. Thus, every act must have its basis in knowledge, which must be derived from the teachings of previous scholars who are linked to an unbroken chain of scholars before them, with the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself at the top of the chain.

The scholars of philosophy divided the education of Islam into two parts which are *ta`alim* and *tarbiyah*. The kind of knowledge that is given prominence in any civilisation will be reflected by the ethical and moral behaviour of its people. We can see the truth of this in what is now displayed before us in this secularised world. Deviant teachings and ways of thinking like atheism, neo-liberalism, feminism, etc., have emerged where they propagate ideals like the rights of the individual, sexual freedom, freedom of expression, free speech, etc.

Some liberal values are by no means foreign to Islam. However, it is unlike what the West envisions and expounds. Islam only rejects what contradicts the Quran and Sunnah. For example, Islam's openness can be attested to during the reign of the Abbasids where scholars were given the freedom to access and study Greek works and embark on large-scale translations of them into Arabic. However, these projects were only allowed to be carried out because there was a certain level of confidence that such knowledge would not be dangerous to the masses. This is because there were able scholars to engage with the ideas that contradict Islam, and thus there was no fear that such knowledge would mislead the people.

Chapter 4 discusses letter exchanges between Raja Ali Haji and Von De Wall. Their discussion mostly revolved around the Malay language. What we can take away from this is an appreciation of the hard work of previous scholars in preserving the Malay language and how even foreigners had a serious interest to learn it. As discussed previously, the ability to be eloquent in speech and language is a reflection of the intellect. Raja Ali also added in *Muqaddimah fil Intizam* that having good language is a sign of *adab* (morale). He makes the connection that only those who practise high ethics are able to use it properly to spread knowledge. The researcher also compares Raja Ali Haji's works with those of other scholars from this Malay world. Hamka and Za`ba's contributions in terms of political involvement, cultural and linguistic contributions, as well as religious contributions.This study has so far found that although these figures might have been influential and contributed across various fields, they do not live up to Raja Ali Haji's stature as a religious figure.

Lastly, the main thing that the researcher would like to emphasise is that it is very important for us to get back to the tradition of knowledge of our previous Islamic scholars. Turning away from this will only result in the crisis of knowledge and the crisis of the Muslim mind. It has been proven that problematic ideologies such as liberalism, atheism, secularism and other isms have emerged thanks to a more secularised approach in education which makes no room for God. Continuation and the prolongation of this will only drive us further away from the desired Muslim civilisation, and consequently further away from Allah and His Messenger. May Allah forgive us all and grant the Muslims the true path of knowledge where it can serve as intermediary to His pleasure and presence.

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